

THE LIFE AND DOCTRINE OF

GURŪ NĀNAK

b y

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A B S T R A C T

The thesis is divided into four sections. The first is a brief introductory section dealing with the historical, social, and religious background. The historical survey concerns the Pañjāb and covers the period AD 1398-1540. The treatment of the religious background principally concerns the Sant tradition of Northern India.

The second section describes the sources available for a reconstruction of the life of Gurū Nānak. It begins with a brief survey of the more important contributions by European writers and then considers the limited contribution of the Ādi Granth to our knowledge of Gurū Nānak's life. The greater part of the section concerns the Pañjābi janam-sākhīs which, notwithstanding their general unreliability, constitute our principal source of biographical information.

The third section deals with the life of Gurū Nānak. It begins with a translation of the relevant portion of Bhaī Gurdās' first Var, followed by the paraphrases of the Purātan janam-sākhīs and the first pothī of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. Five categories are postulated, namely the established, the probable, the possible, the improbable, and the impossible. The criteria to be employed in testing the manifold janam-sākhī traditions are defined, and a conspectus of the various traditions is set out in the form of a chart. An attempt is

then made to fit the various sākhīs into their appropriate categories. This is followed by an examination of the chronology of Gurū Nānak's travels, and the section concludes with an account of the Gurū's life based upon the sākhīs which have been accepted as established or probable.

The fourth section represents an effort to gather into a systematic pattern the teachings of Gurū Nānak which are dispersed throughout the Ādi Granth. The section is subdivided into subsections treating Gurū Nānak's doctrines of the nature of God, the divine self-expression, the nature of unregenerate man, and the discipline required in order to attain salvation.

P R E F A C E

This study of the life and doctrine of Gurū Nānak is based upon materials currently available in London. Practically all sources of any significance are to be found in the India Office Library and the British Museum, but there are two gaps which should be noted. The first is the absence of any copy of the second and third pothīs of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. Khālsā College, Amritsar, possesses a manuscript copy of the first three pothīs of this janam-sākhī, but so far only the first (Pothī Sach-khand) has been published. Secondly, there is no manuscript copy of the Gyān-ratānā-valī available in London. In neither case, however, does the absence involve a serious limitation. Printed editions of the Gyān-ratānā-valī, which evidently correspond closely to extant manuscript versions, are to be found in the India Office Library and the British Museum; and it seems clear that the biographical contribution of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī is almost wholly concentrated in Pothī Sach-khand.

As this study is largely based upon Pañjābī sources, words which are common to Pañjābī and other North Indian languages have almost all been transcribed in their Pañjābī forms (e.g. gurū, dharam, karam, śabad, &c). The only exceptions to this rule are a few instances in which a Sanskrit or Hindī form has secured an established

place in English usage (e.g. bhakti).

With the exception of extracts from the Ādi Granth and cases where the originals are not available in print, quotations from works in Pañjābī or Hindī have been given in English translation only. Many of the extracts from the Ādi Granth have been translated with some freedom in an effort to bring out their meanings with greater clarity. Bracketed portions indicate words which do not occur in the original, but which have been inserted in order to give continuity to a translation. The translations are my own, but in the case of passages from the Ādi Granth and the works of Bhāī Gurdās extensive use has been made of the modern Pañjābī paraphrases provided in a number of vernacular commentaries.

Except where otherwise indicated dates are all AD. In the section "The Theology of Gurū Nānak" page numbers, unless otherwise indicated, are those of the standard editions of the Ādi Granth. All quotations from the Ādi Granth have been taken from the text printed in Tejā Singh's Śabadārath Śrī Gurū Granth Śahib Jī, a work which follows the standard Ādi Granth pagination.

I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere gratitude to all who have provided advice and assistance during the period of my research. In particular I offer my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Professor A. L. Basham.

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

u	उ	उ	j	ज	ज
ū	ऊ	ऊ	jh	झ	झ
a	अ	अ	ṅ	ङ	ङ
ā	आ	आ	ṭ	ट	ट
i	इ	इ	ṭh	ठ	ठ
ī	ई	ई	ḍ	ड	ड
e	ए	ए	ḍh	ढ	ढ
ai	ऐ	ऐ	ṇ	ण	ण
o	ओ	ओ	t	त	त
au	औ	औ	th	थ	थ
			d	द	द
s	स	स	dh	ध	ध
ś	{ म	श	n	न	न
ṣ		ष	p	प	प
h	ह	ह	ph	फ	फ
k	क	क	b	ब	ब
kh	ख	ख	bh	भ	भ
<u>kh</u>	घ	घ	m	म	म
g	ग	ग	y	य	य
gh	ग	घ	r	र	र
ṅ	ङ	ङ	l	ल	ल
ch	च	च	v	व	व
chh	छ	छ	r	र	र
			rh	र	र

ABBREVIATIONS

AG	The <u>Ādi Granth</u>
Aṣṭ	aṣṭapadī
BB JS	The <u>Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī</u> lithographed by Hafaz Kutub Din of Lahore in AD 1871
BM	British Museum
BN (B)	Mrs. A. S. Beveridge, <u>The Bābur-nāma in English</u> . London, 1921.
Briggs	J. Briggs, <u>History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the year AD 1612</u> , translated from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta.
E & D	H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, <u>The History of India as told by its own Historians</u> . London, 1871-73.
Expanded 1871 edition	The <u>Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī</u> lithographed by Divān Buṭa Singh of Lahore in AD 1871.
GR	The edition of the <u>Gyān -ratanāvalī</u> lithographed by Charāguddīn Sarājuddīn of Lahore in AD 1891.
IG	<u>The Imperial Gazetteer of India</u> .
IO Library	The India Office Library.
JRAS	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</u> .
JS	janam-sākhī
KG	The <u>Kabīr-granthāvalī</u>
Macauliffe	M. A. Macauliffe, <u>The Sikh Religion</u> , London, 1909.
Mih JS	Kirpāl Singh's edition of the <u>Miharbān Janam-sākhī</u> (<u>Poṭhī Sach-khaṇḍ</u>). Amritsar, 1962.

MK	Kānh Singh Nābhā's <u>Guruśabad Ratanākar Mahān Koś</u> , Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature (commonly referred to as the <u>Mahān Koś</u>). Paṭialā, 1960, 2nd edition, revised with Addendum.
Pur JS	Vir Singh's <u>Purātan Janam-sakhī</u> . Amritsar, 5th edition, 1959.
S	Samvat, dating according to the Vikram Era.
SOAS	The Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
TA	B. De's translation of Nizāmuddīn Aḥmad's <u>Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī</u> .
TD	'Abdulla's <u>Tārīkh-i-Dāūdī</u> .
TKJ	Ni'matullah's <u>Tārīkh-i-Khān Jahānī</u> .
TMS	K. K. Basu's translation of Yāhyā bin Aḥmad's <u>Tārīkh-i-Mubarak Shāhī</u> .
TSA	Aḥmad Yādgar's <u>Tārīkh-i-Salātīn-i-Afghānā</u> .

With references from the Ādi Granth a number in brackets indicates the number of a stanza (aṅk or paupī). The designation (1R) indicates a reference from the rahau or refrain of a pad.

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THE BACKGROUND

In 1412 Mahmūd Shāh Tughluq died from natural causes. To his contemporaries it must have seemed a surprising way to die. Fourteen years previously Tīmūr had descended upon Northern India and had hastened a process of disintegration which was already far advanced. The invader had withdrawn in 1399 leaving chaos and a ruined dynasty, and succeeding years had brought no evident signs of a return to stability. In 1405 the nobles of Delhi invited Mahmūd Shāh, the former sultan, to return, but it was to an insecure throne, to a kingdom which amounted to no more than a fragment of the empire of Muhammad bin Tughluq, to an authority which extended only a short distance beyond the city. Twice Delhi was besieged by Khizr Khān of Multān and only shortage of provisions in the enemy camp had saved the defenders.¹

Khizr Khān, the first of the Sayyid sultans, was the only person in Northern India who could claim to have been a beneficiary of Tīmūr's invasion. During Tīmūr's occupation of Delhi he had emerged from hiding in the hills of Mewat and had been appointed

¹TMS, pp. 183-5. TA, i.289, 290.

governor of Multān and Dīpālpur by the invader.¹ In the years which followed he extended his authority eastwards with the obvious intention of gaining the Delhi throne. The city eventually fell to him in 1414² and at last the return to order within the Sultanate began.

It was a fitful and protracted process. Khizr Khān himself concentrated on the area which he already ruled and did not seek to extend it by means of conquest. This meant ignoring the developing strength of Jaunpur on his eastern flank, but it was nevertheless a wise policy and one which brought a measure of success. Mubārak Shāh, the second of the Sayyid line, did not leave the Sultanate any more stable than he had inherited it from his father, but nor did he permit it to relapse into the chaos of the years following Tīmūr's invasion. This was an achievement of some note, for during the thirteen years of Mubārak Shāh's reign the Pañjāb was subjected to pressures which would have overwhelmed a weak sultan. These were the years of Jasrat Khokhar, of Paulād Turkbachchā, and of Shaikh 'Alī. Mubārak Shāh's successful resistance to all three marks him as a ruler of some considerable

¹TMS, p.173. TA, i.281. Ferishtah also includes Lahore (Briggs i.497). The Mulfūzāt-i-Tīmūrī (E & D, iii, 475) and Sharafuddīn Yazdī's Zafar-nama (E & D, iii. 521) mention only Multān.

²TMS, pp. 182-6.

competence.¹

Following his assassination in 1434, however, the Sayyid grip loosened and the Sultanate's authority again contracted until it covered no more than Delhi and its immediate environs. Muhammad Shāh (1434-45) was followed by 'Ālam Shāh (1445-51), the butt of the famous couplet:

From Delhi to Pālam
Is the realm of Shāh Ālam.²

In the meantime another authority had been gathering strength in the Pañjāb. Sultān Shāh, an Afghan of the Lodī tribe, had been granted the fief of Sarhind by Khizr Khān in 1418, and with it the title of Islām Khān.³ In 1430 he had been killed fighting Shaikh 'Alī and in accordance with his wishes Sarhind had passed to his nephew Bahlūl Lodī.⁴ Bahlūl continued to gather strength at the expense of the Delhi authority and by the time 'Ālam Shāh succeeded to the Sultanate in 1445 most of the Pañjāb was in his hands. After two unsuccessful attempts to take Delhi, the first in 1443-44 during the reign of Muhammad Shāh and the second in

¹TMS, pp. 200-9, 220-38. TA, i.300-21.

²"Shahanshāhī Shāh 'Ālam, az Dehlī tā Pālam" - K. S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanate, p. 124 n.64. The English rendering is by Dr. Percival Spear, India: A Modern History, p.109. The irony lies in the literal meaning of 'Ālam Shāh's title - "the Emperor of the world".

³TMS, p.196. TA, i.297. According to Ferishtah the grant was made following the defeat of Mallū Iqbāl Khān in 1405 (Briggs, i.545).

⁴TA, i.314, 332-3.

1447, Bahlūl Lodī finally secured the throne in 1451.¹

Under the Lodīs the Sultanate of Delhi experienced a brief renaissance. Bahlūl Lodī's attentions were directed primarily to the kingdom of Jaunpur and in 1479 his efforts finally succeeded. Husain Shāh fled to Bihār after a series of defeats and the Sharqī dynasty of Jaunpur came to an end.² Bahlūl's son, Sikandar Lodī (1489-1517), extended the Sultanate's authority still further in the east and south-east. The praise bestowed on Sikandar by the Persian historians must be treated with some reserve, but a certain measure of it does appear to have been earned. The Sultanate enjoyed an unaccustomed degree of security and prosperity, and signs of a cultural revival began to appear.³

Bahlūl and Sikandar had, however, left two problems unsolved. One was the authority of the Afghān nobles and the other the defence of the Sultanate's north-west border where, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Bābur had appeared. Ibrāhīm Lodī (1517-26) grappled with the first of these problems, but in a manner which only aggravated it.⁴ The Sultanate once again

¹TA, i, 334-7. TKJ, E & D, v. 72-78.

²TA, i.353. TKJ, E & D, v. 90.

³TA, i. 384-92. TD, E & D, iv.445-7, 468. I. H. Qureshi, The Administration of the Delhi Sultanate, pp. 183-4.

⁴TA, i. 403-6. TSA, E & D, v. 22.

began to decline into confusion, and this condition provided Bābur with his opportunity. In 1526 the Battle of Pāṇipat brought the Sultanate to an end and the Mughal period began.

Gurū Nānak was born in 1469, during the reign of Bahlūl Lodī. His birth took place near Lahore and apart from a period of travels his life was spent in this area, the three places most closely associated with his name being his father's village of Talvaṇḍī,¹ the town of Sultānpur,² and the village of Kartārpur.³ It is accordingly with the Pañjāb that we are chiefly concerned in this introductory survey, and in particular with the central portion now occupied by the modern districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdāspur and Jullundur. The period to be covered extends from Tīmūr's entry in 1398 to Humāyūn's ejection in 1540. The latter event provides a convenient terminus as it followed soon after the death of Gurū Nānak in 1538 or 1539.

The Persian histories and the personal memoirs which constitute our principal sources together provide a connected account of the Delhi Sultanate extending over the whole period, but they do not offer anything resembling a connected account of Pañjāb

¹Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī in the tahsīl of Shekhūpurā, Lahore District.

²Jullundur District. See *infra* p.348, n. 1.

³On the right bank of the Rāvī River, opposite Dehrā Bābā Nānak. It should not be confused with the town of the same name in Jullundur District, the location of the Kartārpur version of the AG.

history. The concern of the writers was to record the activities of the various rulers of the period. Whenever a sultān's attention was occupied by the Pañjāb the accounts turn to it, but at other times it is generally ignored. The Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī relates the history of Multān for its period of independence from 1443 to the fourth decade of the sixteenth century,¹ but the Pañjāb remained, in theory at least, under Delhi or Āgrā and so failed to qualify for a separate regional treatment.

The result is an alternation of light and darkness, and in some cases the darkness extends over many years. Moreover, the light is by no means a consistently clear one. The writers were generally concerned with the military and political activities of the sultans, and their histories faithfully reflect this interest. The only significant exception is Bābur who in his Memoirs, and particularly in his description of Hindustān,² makes many observations beyond those of a narrowly military or political nature. Even here, however, we find relatively little material for the social background of the period. The description

¹TA, vol. iii, part ii, pp. 787-812. For accounts of Multān history derived from this source see The History and Culture of the Indian People, vol. iv (The Delhi Sultanate), pp. 230-2; and the Cambridge History of India, vol. iii, pp. 503-5.

²BN(B), ii. 480-521.

of Hindustān provides some very valuable comments, including the celebrated passage on Northern India's lack of charm,¹ but the greater part of the section is devoted to details of flora, fauna, topography and climate. These details are certainly interesting and they are not without their value, but they do little to fill in the social background of the period.

At the beginning of our period the Pañjāb was inevitably involved in the fortunes of the Sultanate, for it lay in the path of Tīmūr. The effect of the invasion upon the Pañjāb is, however, by no means clear. Tīmūr's incursion, for all the havoc it caused, could not have had an immediate effect upon the whole of the province for his route skirted the Pañjāb proper instead of proceeding straight through to Delhi. After crossing the Indus near Kālābāgh Tīmūr moved south towards Multān, passing through Shorkoṭ and Tulambā. The main force then proceeded to Delhi through Dīpālpur and Sāmāna, while Tīmūr himself travelled through Ajodhan (modern Pāk Paṭṭan), Bhatnār, and Tohana. After leaving Tohana he linked up with the main army and continued on to Delhi. Having sacked the city he returned through Meerut,

¹BN(B), ii.518. See also *ibid.* pp. 486-7 (a description and criticism of irrigation methods), 519 (a description of the clothing worn by the poorer people of Hindustān), 520 (the occupational aspect of caste).

Hardwar, the Siwalik Hills, and Jammu.¹ It was from Jammu that the only venture into the heart of the Pañjāb was made. An expedition was sent to Lahore in order to chastise the chieftain Shaikhā Khokhar who had violated earlier promises of assistance.² The expedition duly attacked the city and pillaged it with such thoroughness that it remained desolate until its reoccupation by Mubārak Shāh in 1421.³

Lahore suffered disaster, but most of the Pañjāb escaped the immediate effects of the actual invasion. None of it, however, could have escaped the consequences which followed. The general collapse of authority which Tīmūr so effectively hastened must have affected all parts of the province.

For the years following Tīmūr's withdrawal the Pañjāb retained its interest as far as the chroniclers were concerned, as it was within the Pañjāb and Multān that the power of Khizr Khān developed. In 1405 Khizr Khān had defeated and killed Mallū Iqbāl Khān who, prior to the invasion, had controlled both Delhi and Sultan Mahmūd Shāh Tughluq. Following Tīmūr's

¹K. S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanate, pp. 16-40.

²The Malfūzāt-i-Tīmūrī (E & D, iii. 473) and Sharafuddīn Yazdī's Zafar-nama (E & D, iii. 520) indicate that Tīmūr despatched the expedition from Jammu, but did not lead it personally. The TMS, p. 173, and the TA, i.281, state that Tīmūr himself led the expedition.

³TMS, p.204. TA, i.302.

withdrawal Mallū Iqbāl Khān had regained possession of the city, and in 1405 he set out to reduce Khizr Khān and his ally Bahram Khān Turkbachchā of Sāmāna. Bahram Khān submitted, but Khizr Khān's army defeated and killed Iqbāl Khān, thus opening the way for Sultan Mahmūd's permanent return.¹ Following this Khizr Khān brought Sāmāna, Sarhind and Hissār Fīrozah under his control,² and in 1414 finally took Delhi.³

Khizr Khān's accession to the Delhi throne reunited Multān and the Pañjāb to the Sultanate, but this did not mean an immediate return to stability. On the contrary, it was within the two western provinces, particularly the Pañjāb, that Khizr Khān's successor, Sultan Mubārak Shāh, had to contend with much the most serious of his security problems. The greater part of Mubārak Shāh's attention during his reign of thirteen years was absorbed in efforts to control Jasrat Khokhar of Siālkoṭ, Faulād Turkbachchā of Bhaṭīṇḍā, and Shaikh 'Alī of Kābul, three agents of havoc and destruction who brought much disorder and suffering to the Pañjāb.

¹TMS, p.180. TA, i.286. Mahmūd had returned at Iqbāl Khān's invitation in 1401 or 1402, but discovering that his position was intended to be that of a puppet sultan he shortly afterwards defected to Jaunpur. TMS, pp. 176-7.

²TMS, pp. 182-3. Briggs, i.503.

³TMS, p.186. TA, i.291-2.

Jasrat Khokhar, who is variously described as the son and as the brother of Shaikhā Khokhar, was the first to defy Delhi. Khizr Khān's death in 1421 seemed to offer him an opportunity of extending his influence and even of securing the throne. He immediately left Siālkot and moved south-east into the area of Ludhiānā. After defeating the governor, Rāi Fīroz Maīn, he devastated the left bank of the Satlej as far as Rūpar where he recrossed the river and proceeded to Jullundur. There he captured the governor, Zīrak Khān, and then moved down the Pañjāb again to invest Sarhind, held by Sultān Shāh Lodī. Mubārak Shāh advanced to meet him and Jasrat Khokhar withdrew across the Satlej. The Delhi forces managed to make a surprise crossing at Rūpar and defeated Jasrat, who then fled to the Kashmir foothills.¹

In 1422 he emerged again to make an unsuccessful effort to capture Lahore. The following year he appeared on the plains again and did much damage to the districts of Lahore and Dīpālpur, but withdrew at the approach of Sikandar Tuhfā, the governor of Lahore.² After this he remained in the hills for a number of years, awaiting another favourable opportunity. In 1428 he ventured out

¹TMS, pp. 200-4. TA, i.300-2. The TA attributes these and subsequent activities to Shaikhā Khokhar, but Badaūnī, i, 381, and Ferishtah (Briggs, i.514) support TMS.

²TMS, pp. 204-6. TA, i.302-4.

again, but was defeated by Sikandar Tuhfā at Kāngrā and once more withdrew to the hills.¹ It was not until the turbulent years of 1431 and 1432 that Jasrat Khokhar became a serious menace again.

During the interval of relative peace Mubārak Shāh occupied himself in the east, and apart from Jasrat Khokhar's 1428 incursion little is heard of the Pañjāb until the emergence of Faulād Turkbachchā in 1430. In the previous year Sayyid Sālīm, the loyal governor of Bhaṭṭiṇḍā, had died and Faulād, his slave, had seized the fort with its substantial treasure. Mubārak Shāh sent forces against him and Faulād responded by inviting assistance from Shaikh 'Alī of Kābul. In 1431 Shaikh 'Alī led an army down to Bhaṭṭiṇḍā and then back towards Lahore, pillaging the countryside he passed through, but sparing Lahore in return for a payment of tribute. He then turned southwards, but after killing Sultān Shāh Lodī was defeated at Multān by Imādul Mulk and forced to flee.²

In the meantime Jasrat Khokhar had begun his depredations once again. Mubārak Shāh's advance in early 1432 forced him to raise his siege of Lahore, but as soon as the sultan withdrew he

¹TMS, pp. 220-1. TA, i.310-11.

²TMS, pp. 222-31. TA, i. 312-5.

returned again to lay waste the district. Again Mubārak Shāh set out from Delhi, but before he reached Lahore Jasrat had been defeated by Nusrat Khān, governor of Lahore and Jullundur.¹

This did not end the strife, however, for Faulād Turk-bachchā had emerged from his stronghold to take advantage of the developing confusion.² Shaikh 'Alī had also returned and, having worked his destructive way up from Shorkoṭ to Lahore, he took the city, pillaged it, and set out to capture Dīpālpur. Once again Mubārak Shāh acted promptly and effectively. Shaikh 'Alī was obliged to retire and Lahore was recaptured. Tulambā, which was in the hands of Shaikh 'Alī's nephew Muzzafar, was also relieved.³ Order was at last being restored to the Pañjāb. Faulād was once again confined within Bhaṭīṇḍā and was eventually killed shortly before Mubārak Shāh's assassination in 1434.⁴

In 1436 Muhammad Shāh, the third Sayyid ruler, sent an expedition to quell another disturbance raised by Jasrat Khokhar,⁵ but within the Pañjāb interest now moves from the declining Sayyids to the rising Lodīs. Sultān Shāh had been succeeded in Sarhind by

¹TA, i.315-6. TMS, pp. 213-4.

²TMS, pp. 232-3. TA, i.316.

³TMS, pp. 235-8. TA, i.318-20.

⁴TMS, p.240. TA, i.321. The Pañjāb troubles of Mubārak Shāh's reign have been well described by Dr. K. S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanate, pp. 84-113, 121.

⁵TA, i, 327.

his nephew Bahlūl¹ and the decline of the Sayyids following Mubārak Shāh's death was matched by the rise of the Lodīs. In 1440 Bahlūl Lodī decisively intervened to save Muhammad Shāh from an invasion by Mahmūd Khaljī of Malwa,² but his motive was obviously to leave the way open for his own advancement rather than to protect the sultan. During the same reign he seized Lahore, Dīpālpur, Sunām, Hissār Fīrozah, and other parganas,³ and by 'Ālam Shāh's accession in 1445 he had most of the Pañjāb under his control. In 1448 'Ālam Shāh transferred his capital to Badaon, having previously imprisoned his vazīr, Hamīd Khān.⁴ The prisoner, however, escaped and taking possession of Delhi invited Bahlūl Lodī to become titular sultan. Bahlūl accepted the invitation, but not the subordinate status intended by Hamīd Khān. After concealing his plans for some time he arrested Hamīd Khān and formally ascended the throne. This took place in 1451.⁵

¹TA, i. 332-3. TKJ, E & D, v. 71. Briggs, i. 545-6.

²TA, i. 334. TKJ, E & D, v. 73.

³TA, i. 334. TKJ, E & D, v. 73.

⁴Briggs, i. 542.

⁵TA, i. 337. TKJ, E & D, v. 77.

The Lodī dynasty had acquired the succession by means of Bahlūl's position in the Pañjāb, but very little is heard of the province during the Lodī period until Bābur's invasions forced attention back to it. The reason for this was the Lodīs' preoccupation with events in the east, particularly in connection with Jaunpur and Gwalior. On a few occasions incidents which occurred in the west were of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the Persian historians, but in most cases these were events which concerned the Sultanate's relationships with Multān and which only indirectly involved the Pañjāb. Immediately after his coronation Sultān Bahlūl set out for Multān to restore it to the Sultanate, but a revolt in Delhi and, in consequence, the approach of Mahmūd Sharqī of Jaunpur forced him to turn back.¹ This was the beginning of a series of wars.² Jaunpur was eventually conquered in 1579, but the effort had absorbed the greater part of Bahlūl's reign. The Pañjāb had to be largely neglected and as a result we know little about it during this period. Not until the very end of his reign does it draw any significant attention in its own right. Shortly before Bahlūl's death a rebellion by Tātār Khān of Lahore was defeated by Bahlūl's son Nizām Khān,

¹TA, i.339-40.

²TA, i. 340-53. TKJ, E & D, v. 78-90.

the governor of Sarhind and the future Sultan Sikandar.¹

The same pattern was repeated during Sikandar's reign. In this case the principal objective in the east was Gwalior, but the result was the same as far as our knowledge of the Pañjāb is concerned. The only events to attract the historians' passing notice were a conspiracy which was laid in 1500 and the transfer of some former Timurid territories in the north-west to Daulat Khān Lodī, governor of Lahore.

The plot against Sultan Sikandar is said to have involved twenty-two of his nobles and to have been divulged by Prince Fateh Khān, one of his brothers and the person whom the conspiring nobles intended to raise to the throne. One of the principal conspirators turned out to be Sa'īd Khān Sarwānī, the governor of Lahore. Sikandar banished him and in his place evidently appointed Daulat Khān Lodī, the son of the Tātār Khān who had previously occupied the position.² For the chroniclers the chief interest lay in the convenient pretext to attack Gwalior which was provided by the flight there of some of the exiles. The Pañjāb enters the record as no more than an incidental detail.

¹TD, E & D, iv. 440-44. TSA, extract translated in N. Roy's Niamatullah's History of the Afghans, Part i, pp. 107-9.

²TA, i.369, and TKJ, E & D, v. 96, refer to Sa'īd Khān Sarwānī's involvement and banishment, but make no reference to the appointment of Daulat Khān. It is not entirely clear when Daulat Khān was appointed to Lahore, but a reference made by Bābur indicates that it could not have been later than 1504. (BN(B), i.383. See infra p.351.)

The second reference occurs in Bābur's Memoirs. He records that shortly after he took Kābul in 1504 Sayyid 'Alī Khān, the governor under Sultan Sikandar of Bhera, Khushāb and Chenāb, had fled in terror. Some years later, finally succumbing to his fears, he renounced his authority in favour of Daulat Khān, who in turn entrusted the territories to his eldest son, 'Alī Khān.¹ Daulat Khān is also referred to in connection with a revolution in Multān. A dispute had developed between the new sultan of Multān, Mahmūd Langāh, and the vazīr, Jām Bāyazīd. The latter had withdrawn to Shorkoṭ and from there solicited the assistance of Sikandar Lodī. Daulat Khān was ordered by Sikandar to give the necessary assistance. Before the opposing armies met, however, an agreement was reached which left Jām Bāyazīd in possession of Shorkoṭ under Lodī sovereignty.²

Like his father and grandfather, Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī was, for the greater part of his reign, occupied in the east, and the result is that until his latter years the Pañjāb is once again largely ignored by the chroniclers. We know that Daulat Khān Lodī maintained his control over the province and we may assume from his subsequent resistance to Bābur that his hold must have been

¹BN(B), i.382-3.

²TA, vol.iii, part ii, pp.802-3.

a firm one. There are, however, no details of any significance provided until, with Daulat Khān's invitation to Bābur, all interest suddenly turns to the province.

Ibrāhīm Lodī's reign (1517-26) brought a sudden and decisive decline in the Sultanate's fortunes. The sultan was by no means devoid of ability, but his efforts to curb the power of his Afghan nobles proved disastrous. Within five years he had been defeated by Rānā Sāṅgā of Mewar,¹ confusion had overtaken the eastern portion of the Sultanate, and there could be no doubting the strength of the hostile forces which were building up against him.² Ibrāhīm finally turned for help to Daulat Khān. Fearing for his own safety Daulat Khān did not answer the summons in person, but instead sent his son Dilāwar Khān. In order to impress upon Dilāwar Khan the perils of disobedience Ibrāhīm issaid to have shown him rebel nobles undergoing torture.³ The news when conveyed to Daulat Khān had, however, the opposite effect. In 1523 he sent Dilāwar Khān to Bābur with an invitation to invade the Sultanate.⁴

¹BN(B), ii.593. K. S. Lal, op.cit., pp. 209-11.

²TA, i.406. TSA, E & D, v. 22.

³TSA, E & D, v. 22-3. TA, i.406-7.

⁴TSA, E & D, v.23-4.

Bābur had already made three brief incursions into the Sultanate's territory and in 1520, during the third of the incursions, had proceeded as far as Sayyidpur (modern Eminābād) before being summoned back by a threat to Qandahār.¹ By the time Daulat Khān's invitation arrived, Qandahār had been secured and Bābur was persuaded that the opportune time for an invasion of Hindustān had arrived. A separate invitation was also received from 'Ālam Khān, the uncle of Sultan Ibrāhīm.²

During Bābur's 1524 invasion it was the area of Lahore and Dīpālpur which suffered most. Ibrāhīm had despatched an army under Bihār Khān Lodī which had occupied Lahore and which now opposed the Mughal advance. Bābur defeated it outside Lahore and then proceeded to sack and burn the city. Following this, Dīpālpur was also stormed and plundered. At some stage the fugitive Daulat Khān met Bābur and to his chagrin received only Jullundur and Sultānpur. It appears that he made no objection at the time, but Dilāwar Khān divulged to Bābur the retaliation which his father was meditating. Bābur promptly arrested Daulat Khān, but then released him and appointed him governor of Sultānpur. Daulat Khān, however, took refuge in the hills and there

¹BN(B), i.428-9.

²The precise date is not clear. BN(B), i.440-1.

awaited an opportunity to restore his position. His hostility evidently persuaded Bābur that further advance was no longer practicable for after garrisoning Lahore, Dīpālpur, Siālkot, and Kālānaur he withdrew to Kābul.¹

As soon as he was out of the Pañjāb Daulat Khān took Sultānpur and Dīpālpur, and made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Siālkot. 'Ālam Khān, who had been left in command of the Dīpālpur garrison, fled to Kābul. From there he returned with troops and a royal commission enjoining the co-operation of the officers holding Lahore. Daulat Khān, however, won him over and together they marched on Delhi. A night attack on Ibrāhīm's army was successful, but next morning the sultan retaliated and scattered their army. Meanwhile Bābur had left Kābul and was approaching rapidly. Daulat Khān and 'Ālam Khān were both obliged to submit and Daulat Khān died soon afterwards in Sultānpur. In April 1526 the Battle of Panīpat destroyed the Sultanate. The Mughal period had begun.²

Following his victory Bābur proceeded eastwards without delay and once again attention moves away from the Pañjāb. Bābur himself refers briefly to a minor outbreak of sedition which

¹BN(B), i.441-2.

²Ibid., i.443-4, ii.455-75. TKJ, E & D, v.106-7. TSA, E & D, v. 26-30.

occurred in Lahore in 1529,¹ and Yādgār describes a visit to the city which Mrs. Beveridge has accepted and placed later in the same year.² Bābur died in 1530 and in 1531 Humāyūn lost the greater part of the Pañjāb to Kāmraṇ, his younger brother. Kāmraṇ advanced from Kābul, captured Lahore, and took possession of all the territory up to the Satlej. Humāyūn acquiesced in the seizure and even added Hissār Fīrozah to it.³ During the years that followed Humāyūn was fully occupied in the east. In 1540 he fled to Sindh through Lahore,⁴ and with his departure the period covered by this survey comes to an end.

Practically all that has been described hitherto has been of an essentially military or political nature. These were the features which interested the Persian historians and our efforts to reconstruct the period inevitably reflect this interest to a considerable degree. The material for a reconstruction of the social background is much slighter, and for the most part we are bound to rely chiefly upon inference and assumption.

¹BN(B), ii.687-8.

²TSA, E & D, v.40. BN(B), ii.698.

³Akbar-nāma, trans. H. Beveridge, i.290-2. Ishwari Prasad, The Life and Times of Humayun, pp.44-5.

⁴Akbar-nāma, i.355-60. Humayun-nāma, trans. A. S. Beveridge, pp. 143-6.

One aspect of the social background which lends itself to inference is that of security and the consequences of its breakdown. We do not know precisely what happened to the districts through which Tīmūr passed, but it requires no great effort of imagination to envisage what must have taken place. The historians confine their detailed descriptions to the more important towns such as Tulambā, Delhi and Lahore, but we may safely assume that much of the countryside traversed by the invading army sustained considerable damage. The same conclusion must apply in appreciably greater measure to the period of Jasrat Khokhar, Faulād Turkbachchā, and Shaikh 'Alī. Tīmūr's invasion was a spectacular event and as such has attracted much interest, but there can be no doubt that the Pañjāb suffered far more at the hands of the three later adventurers, for their depredations were spread over a much wider geographical area and over a lengthier period of time.

We should not, however, permit our imaginations to carry us too far in our effort to envisage the condition of the Pañjāb during these times of insecurity. Bābur provides an interesting observation on the manner in which the people of Hindustān coped with invasion.

In Hindustān hamlets and villages, towns indeed, are depopulated and set up in a moment!

If the people of a large town, one inhabited for years even, flee from it, they do it in such a way that not a sign or trace of them remains in a day or a day and a half. On the other hand, if they fix their eyes on a place in which to settle, they need not dig water-courses or construct dams because their crops are all rain-grown, and as the population of Hindūstān is unlimited, it swarms in. They make a tank or dig a well; they need not build houses or set up walls - khas-grass (Andropogon muricatum) abounds, wood is unlimited, huts are made, and straightway there is a village or a town!¹

The fall of a besieged city might well bring much loss of life and property, but rural areas seem to have been more fortunate. Serious loss of life would normally have occurred only when an invading force lingered in a particular area and forced the local inhabitants to remain in hiding for a period which exhausted the food they had carried away with them.²

As far as security was concerned the years covered by the reigns of Bahlūl and Sikandar Lodī were clearly the most stable. This conclusion bears a particular significance in the context of a study of Gurū Nānak's life and thought, for it was during this period that he was born and grew to manhood. His first direct experience of invasion and its attendant sufferings would almost certainly have come with Bābur's entry into Northern

¹BN(B), ii.487-8.

²Ibid., p. 487 n.2.

India. There does exist a possibility that he may previously have witnessed warfare or its effects during his period of travels, but there is nothing to suggest that this was the case and his own works strongly support the assumption that Bābur's invasions provided his first experience of this kind.¹ The district of Lahore had suffered much during the invasion of Tīmūr and the turbulent days of Mubārak Shāh, but by Gurū Nānak's time these experiences must have been no more than a memory.

Here too, however, it is necessary to impose checks upon the imagination. It was a period of relative, not absolute, security. Bābur once again provides a corrective.

If one go into Hindūstān the Jats and Gujūrs
always pour down in countless hordes from hill
and plain for loot in bullock and buffalo. These
ill-omened peoples are just senseless oppressors!
Formerly their doings did not concern us much be-
cause the country was an enemy's, but they began
the same senseless work after we had taken it.
When we reached Siālkot, they fell in tumult on
poor and needy folks who were coming out of the
town to our camp, and stripped them bare. I had
the silly thieves sought for,² and ordered two or
three of them cut to pieces.

We must assume that robbery of this kind never departed from the Pañjāb during our period.

¹See *infra*, pp. 413 ff.

²BN(B), ii.454.

The Lodī period also provides a contrast with the preceding half century in terms of prosperity and cost of living. The Persian histories lay great emphasis upon the prevailing cheapness of articles, particularly with regard to the reign of Sultan Ibrāhīm, and they attribute this feature to the relative security of the period and to a series of remarkably good harvests.¹ In this respect their analysis was evidently mistaken for the cheapness of goods appears to have been primarily the reflex of a scarcity of precious metals.² There is, however, no apparent reason to doubt that the Lodī period was one of comparative prosperity. In the circumstances of the time such prosperity would have been a natural development and Bābur seems to imply that it had in fact taken place.³ A fertile soil, a favourable climate, a relatively limited population, and a considerable measure of security would all have combined to produce this favourable economic condition. The district surrounding Lahore

¹TA, i.384. TD, E & D, iv. 468, 475-6. See also S. M. Imam al-Dīn, Tārīkh-i-Khān Jahānī, Introduction, vol. i, p.59.

²W. H. Moreland, The Agrarian System of Moslem India, p.68. Bābur's testimony, however, conflicts with the TD references upon which Moreland based his argument (E & D, iv.476). The Bābur-nāma mentions "the great amount of wealth in Hindustan" and the country's "masses of gold and silver". BN(B), ii.518, 519.

³Ibid., ii.480.

was, and still is, particularly fertile.¹ Food and other necessities appear to have been readily available, manufactures were developing, and there was a satisfactory trade balance.² It seems clear that Gurū Nānak was born into a favoured period, at least as far as security and economic conditions were concerned.

Gurū Nānak's own works add little to this background in political terms and his social comment chiefly concerns the religious circumstances of the time. All of his political comment is concentrated in four pads which were obviously prompted by Bābur's invasions³ and even here the concern which he expresses is an essentially religious one, for it relates to the unrighteousness of the Lodī rulers.⁴ The same basically religious concern is also evident in a group of śloks which are sometimes quoted as Gurū Nānak's commentary on the political and social disturbances of his own time.⁵ One of the most popular of these has been a ślok from Vār Mājh.

¹Ain-i-Akbarī, vol. ii, trans. H. S. Jarrett, p.312.

²I. H. Qureshi, The Administration of the Delhi Sultanate, pp. 225-6.

³See infra p. 414.

⁴See infra p. 416.

⁵The Miharban JS sets the three most important of these śloks in the context of a discourse with Siddhs on Mount Sumeru. See infra pp. 254-5.

Kali kātī rāje kāsāi dharamu pañkha kari uḍariā...¹

The Kaliyug² is a knife, kings are butchers,
dharam has taken wings and flown

These śloks refer to a far broader span of space and time than the period of the Gurū's own lifetime. Their primary application is to the whole of the present cosmic age, not to the contemporary condition of the Lodī Sultanate or the early Mughal administration. The condition of degeneracy which they express is a characteristic of the Kaliyug, and although the specific conditions of the Gurū's own times would certainly be regarded as a reflection of this perversion, they would, in this respect, be no different from those of other historical periods and other places. The issue is that of Truth, the quality which is so conspicuously absent in the Kaliyug. The absence of Truth means darkness and the unconquered self brings suffering.

Kūru amāvasa sachu chandramā dīśai nahī kaha chariā.
 Hau bhālī vikunnī hoī,
 Ādherai rāhu na kōī,
 Vichi haumai kari dukhu roī,
 Kahu Nanaka kini bidhi gati hoī.³

¹Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 16, AG p.145.

²The fourth and final of the cosmic ages; the era of ultimate degeneracy in the cosmic cycle.

³Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 16, AG p.145.

In the dark night of untruth the moon of Truth is concealed. Where shall I go? Searching (for the path) I have gone out of my mind, but in the darkness there is no path. Self-centred instinct¹ torments me and I weep. Nānak says, how is salvation to be found?

This pursuit of Truth and so of salvation was, for Gurū Nānak, mankind's paramount concern, and as a result his comment on contemporary conditions relates almost exclusively to attitudes, customs, and institutions which obstructed this quest. There is in his works an emphasis upon the hypocrisy of both brāhmins and qazis, the acknowledged religious leaders of the Hindu and Muslim communities. It lacks the vehemence of Kabīr's denunciations, but it is nevertheless a strong emphasis and a clear one. According to Gurū Nānak both merited condemnation, for they exercised an authority which they had not earned in a manner calculated to advance their own interests. Religious superstition was widespread and the religious leaders shared it and exploited it. External practices such as idol worship, pilgrimages, ceremonial bathing, austerities, and meticulous performance of ritual were, for him, all futile as means of salvation and were accordingly condemned. Caste exclusiveness constituted another example of superstition and was likewise condemned.

¹Haumai, a word which is impossible to translate adequately. See infra pp. 541 ff.

Criticisms of this nature lead us to the specifically religious background of the period. GurūNānak's comments on contemporary religious attitudes and practices confirm and, to some degree, supplement those of Kabīr and other lesser figures. For the vast majority the essence of religion was to be found in external authority and conventional ceremony. In the case of the Hindu community this authority was accorded to the brāhmins and through them to the Vedas and the Purāṇas. The required response consisted in the performance of the customary rites appropriate to a man's station within the caste structure of society. Much of the language which we encounter points to the continuing tradition of classical Vedānta, but it does not emerge as a dominant influence. For the Muslim also religion meant loyalty to an objective authority. For him the authority was the Qur'ān and its exercise the acknowledged function of the qāzīs.

Orthodox Hinduism and orthodox Islam were the two dominant streams during this period, but they were by no means the only ones. There were several others, and of these three were of particular importance. There was, first, the tradition of Vaiṣṇava bhakti which had spread to Northern India from the south and which was associated, above all others, with the name of Rāmānand. For bhakti the essential religious response was love and in Vaiṣṇava bhakti this love was directed to one of the avatārs of Viṣṇu.

Secondly, there was the ancient tradition of tantric yoga, expressed in Northern India during this period by the numerous adherents of the Kānpaṭa or Nāth sect of yogīs. The sect was divided into various sub-sects, all claiming allegiance to the semi-legendary Gorakhnāth¹ and all following essentially the same Hatha-yoga technique. Thirdly, there were the Muslim Sūfīs, numerically far fewer than the adherents of orthodox Islam, but exercising a considerable influence on the religious thought and practice of Hindus as well as Muslims.

Within each of these religious groupings there was a recognisable continuity, but none of them was completely insulated. All were to some extent influenced by one or more of the others and underwent corresponding modifications. In one significant case this reciprocal exchange issued not simply in the modification of an existing tradition, but in the emergence of a recognisable synthesis, a new pattern which in various respects strongly resembled other existing patterns but which in its wholeness corresponded to none of them. This was the Sant movement of Northern India. The tradition does not belong entirely to our period as it had evidently emerged before the beginning of the fifteenth cen-

¹Gorakhnāth must be accepted as an historical figure, but practically all that is related concerning him must be regarded as legend. His period is uncertain, but appears to have been between the seventh and twelfth centuries A.D. See G.W.Briggs, Gorakhnāth and the Kānpaṭa Yogīs, pp. 228 ff, 250.

tury and one of its principal exponents, Dādū,¹ lived during the latter half of the sixteenth century. It was, however, between 1400 and 1540 that the real synthesis took place, and it was during this period that its greatest work was produced. The Sant movement was by no means the dominant religious tradition during this period, but it was certainly the most fertile and it is of primary importance as far as Gurū Nānak's religious antecedents are concerned.

For the sants, as for the Vaiṣṇava bhagats, the necessary religious response was love, and for this reason the movement has frequently been regarded as an aspect of Vaiṣṇava bhakti.² In several respects, however, the sants disagreed with traditional bhakti and some of these differences were fundamental. Their love was directed not to an avatār, but direct to the supreme God Himself, and their expression of this love was through strictly inward meditation and devotion. It was, moreover, a method which involved suffering, or at least some appreciable difficulties. It was not the easy path of traditional bhakti.

¹His dates, according to Dādū-panthī tradition, are AD 1544-1603. Dādū's caste is not definitely known, but it appears that he was a dhuniyā (cotton carder). Kshitimohan Sen, Medieval Mysticism of India, p.108. According to tradition he was born in Ahmadabad and spent most of his life in different parts of Rājasthan.

²The frequent use of Rām and other Vaiṣṇava names and epithets by the sants has obviously encouraged this misunderstanding.

The sants were monotheists, but the God whom they addressed and with whom they sought union was in no sense to be understood in anthropomorphic terms. His manifestation was through His immanence in His creation and, in particular, through His indwelling within the human soul. It was there that He, by grace, revealed Himself, and man's proper response was a love expressed through meditation on the divine Name. External authorities and ceremonies were useless for this purpose and religious texts, idol worship, formal religious exercises, pilgrimage, and ritual bathing were all accordingly rejected. The inward way to God was open to all who were prepared to accept the difficulties and the discipline which it would involve, and so caste was rejected also. Great importance was attached to the guru who might be a human teacher, or who might be understood not as a person but as the inner voice of God. No value was accorded to celibacy or asceticism. Hindu and Muslim sectarian notions were spurned, not because the two systems were regarded as basically true, but because both were regarded as radically wrong and ultimately futile.¹

These beliefs the sants expressed not in the traditional Sanskrit, but in a language which was closely related to that of the common people to whom they addressed their teachings. Within

¹A particularly clear summary of the characteristics of the Sant movement is given by Dr. Ch. Vaudeville in her Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabir, pp. 7-9.

the tradition and amongst other itinerant sādhūs there evolved a language which, with minor regional modifications, was used by sants all over Northern India. This language has been called sādhukkari. Its basis was Khari Boli, the dialect spoken around Delhi, and to this were added elements drawn from old Rajasthani (Diṅgal), Apabhraṃśa, Pañjābī, and Persian.¹ Most of the sants were from low caste groups and in such cases were generally poorly educated or completely illiterate. For this reason their compositions were usually oral utterances which came to be written down only after a period of circulation.

The first of the great sants was Nāṃdev (AD 1270-1350)² who lived in Maharashtra and whose name is closely linked with the Varkari sect of Paṇḍharpur. The Varakari sect was well within the bhakti tradition and its worship centred on the famous idol of Viṭṭhal³ which was located in Paṇḍharpur. Elements of traditional Vaiṣṇava bhakti are evident in Nāṃdev's work, but his primary emphases are clearly in accord with sant concepts. His influence extended into Northern India as a result of his Hindī works and possibly as a result also of an extended visit to the Pañjāb. Doubts have been

¹Ch. Vaudeville, Kabīr Granthāvalī (Dohā), Introduction, pp. iv-v. Traces of Marāṭhī influence are evident in the works of Nāṃdev and Trilochan.

²R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, and Minor Religious Systems, p. 92, disputed these traditional dates, claiming that Nāṃdev's works indicate a period one hundred years later. Recent work by Marāṭhī scholars favours the traditional dates. The question is fully discussed in Bhagīrath Mishra and Rājārāyan Maurya, Sant Nāṃdev ki Padāvalī, pp. 9-31.

³A manifestation of Kṛiṣṇa.

expressed concerning the assumption that the author of the Hindī paḍs is the same Nāṁdev as the famous Marāṭhī bhagat of Paṇḍharpur, but recent comparisons of the Hindī and Marāṭhī works have established it as at least a strong probability.¹

The tradition of a Pañjāb visit must still be regarded as open to some doubt. According to this tradition Nāṁdev spent twenty years in Ghumān, a village in Baṭālā tahsīl.² In Ghumān itself the tradition is both strong and old, and there is certainly nothing improbable in a sant wandering so far from his home, but the complete absence of any reference in the older Marāṭhī accounts of Nāṁdev's life raises an objection which cannot be overlooked. It may be regarded as a likely tradition, but not as an established one.

The second of the important sants was Raidās, a chamār of Banāras.³ Chronologically Raidās follows Kabīr, but his work

¹Bhagīrath Mishra and Rājanārāyaṇ Maurya, op.cit. This work is a collection of Nāṁdev's Hindī works, drawn from both published and manuscript sources, and prefaced with a lengthy and useful introduction. There are sixty-one of Nāṁdev's Hindī paḍs in the AG. Ślok 241 of the Kabīr śloks (AG, p.1377) may be by Nāṁdev.

²The village is on a sealed road five miles south of Hargobindpur. It contains a samādhi erected by Jassa Singh Rāmgarhiā towards the end of the eighteenth century. MK, p.522. Bābā Balvant Rāy, a resident of the village, possesses a Ms. which contains 157 paḍs and 13 dohas attributed to Nāṁdev. Bhagīrath Mishra and Rājanārāyaṇ Maurya, op.cit., pp. 45, 58.

³In the AG he is called Ravidās. There are 39 of his paḍs in the AG. The number is generally given as 40, but Sorāṭhī 4, p.658, and Mārū 2, p.1106, are the same pad. Ślok 242 of the Kabīr śloks (AG, p.1377) may also be by Raidās.

belongs to an earlier stage of the sant movement and corresponds more closely to that of Nāṁdev. In this earlier stage the links with Vaiṣṇava bhakti are much more prominent and the evidence of influence from other sources much slighter. The Vaiṣṇava concept of the divine avataṁ is rejected and likewise all external ceremonies or aids to worship,¹ but the nature of the devotion offered by these earlier sants resembles the adoration of the bhagats rather than the deeply mystical experience of Kabīr.² There is also a stronger emphasis upon the immanence of God in external phenomena than in Kabīr.³ In the latter's works the emphasis moves more to the inner revelation within the human soul.

Little is known about Ravidās's life and all that we can accept is contained in the occasional references he makes in his works. In several pads he refers to his low caste status as a chamar⁴ and in one to his work as a cobbler.⁵ Elsewhere he describes how the members of his caste carry away the cattle

¹Cf. Ravidās, Dhanāsarī 3, AG p.694.

²Nāṁdev, Gond 3, AG p.873; Bhairau 7, AG p. 1164; Sāraṅ 3, AG. p.1252-3. Ravidās, Sorāṭhi 3, AG p.658-9; Gūjarī 1, AG p.525.

³Nāṁdev, Tilāṅ 2, AG p.727; Gond 2, AG p.873; Malār 1, AG p.1292. Ravidās, Sirī Rāgu 1, AG p.93; Malār 2, AG p.1293.

⁴Ravidās, Gaurī 2, AG p.345; Gaurī Bairāgaṇi 1, AG p.346; Gaurī Purabī 1, AG p.346; Āsā 3, AG p.486.

⁵Ravidās, Sorāṭhi 7, AG p.659.

careases from Banāras.¹ The tradition that he was a disciple of Rāmānand must be rejected. The traditional link between Rāmānand and Kabīr is barely plausible on chronological grounds; and it is evident that Raidās was younger than Kabīr. This is the conclusion which is indicated by the references which he makes to Kabīr² and it places him beyond the time of Rāmānand. Moreover, there is no hint of such a relationship in any of his works.

Raidās makes the characteristic sant emphases, with an evident stress upon the irrelevancy of caste in all that concerns a man's salvation. An even stronger emphasis, and one which is peculiarly his own, is a recurring note of humility and confession. Raidās is a particularly attractive figure and one who has yet to receive the attention he deserves.

With Kabīr the sant tradition moves into a more complicated phase. As in the case of Raidās little is known concerning his life, although a considerable quantity of legend has gathered around him.³ The traditional date of his death, AD 1518, appears to be at least a definite likelihood, but his traditional date of birth, AD 1398,

¹Ravidās, Malār 1, AG p.1293. A pad attributed to the bhagat Dhannā, but evidently revised by Gurū Arjan, repeats this information concerning Raidās (Dhannā, Āsā 2, AG p.487). The pad bears Dhannā's name in the final couplet, but in the AG it is headed Mahālā 5, the title of Gurū Arjan. For another example of a pad by a bhagat preceded by Gurū Arjan's title see Kabīr's Bhairo 5, AG p.1160.

²Ravidās, Āsā 5, AG p.487; Mārū 1, AG p.1106; Malār 2, AG p.1293.

³See Ahmad Shāh, The Bijak of Kabīr, introductory chapter "The Life of Kabīr in Legend", pp.1-28.

must be rejected. No definite year can be given to replace it, but a date in the vicinity of 1440 seems probable.¹ Kabīr's life was spent in Banāras and his death probably took place in the village of Magahar, twenty-seven miles south-east of Bastī. His caste was that of julāhā and it is clear from his works that he followed, in a somewhat erratic manner, his caste's hereditary occupation of weaving. Recent research has established a Nāth background as a strong probability. It now seems clear that Kabīr belonged to a family of non-celibate yogīs converted only recently, and to a considerable degree superficially, to Islam.² The traditional association with Rāmanand cannot be rejected outright, but

¹Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr, pp. 10-11. The question of Kabir's dates is discussed at some length by Parasurām Chaturvedī, Uttarī Bharat kī Sant-paramaparā, pp. 709-33. Chaturvedī decides in favour of AD 1448 as the date of Kabir's death. The principal reason leading him to this conclusion appears to be the tomb in Magahar which is said to bear a date equivalent to AD 1450. (See Archaeological Survey of India (New Series): the Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, vol. ii, p.224.) Another reason may perhaps be a desire to maintain the traditional connection with Ramanand. The fact that 1518 has been consistently maintained in tradition in spite of its manifest conflict with the Rāmanand relationship is one of the principal arguments in favour of the later date. Another is the convergence of the Hindu and Muslim traditions at this point.

²Ch. Vaudeville, Kabīr Granthāvalī (Dohā), p.viii.

it is a most unlikely one. It involves chronological difficulties and the only references which Kabīr makes to Rāmānand are to be found in works of doubtful authenticity.¹ The numerous references which Kabīr does make to a gurū point unmistakably to the Satgurū within, the voice of God within the human soul.

The compositions attributed to Kabīr are seemingly numberless, but only two collections have adequate claims to be regarded as genuine. These are the Kabīr-granthāvalī and the selection included in the Ādi Granth.² To these the Bījak may be added, but with reservations. The Bījak is later than the other two collections and must be regarded as a Kabīr-panthī recasting rather than as the original work of Kabīr. There can be no doubt that the works included in the two older collections have also been altered in oral transmission, but to an appreciably lesser degree than those of the Bījak. The famous translation by Tagore of selections from a collection made by Kshitimohan Sen cannot be

¹Bījak, śabad 77. Tagore, One Hundred Poems of Kabir, no. XXIX, p.36.

²The AG includes 226 pads by Kabīr. Of these 225 are to be found in the bhagat bānī at the end of the various rags (see Appendix 1, p. 608), and the remaining one is included amongst the works of Gurū Arjan (Bhairo 3, AG p.1136). The total number of Kabīr śloks included in the AG is either 237 or 239. The collection entitled Ślok Bhagat Kabīr Jīu ke (AG pp. 1364-77) has 243, but of these five are by Gurū Arjan (nos. 209, 210, 211, 214, 221), one by Gurū Amar Dās (no. 220), and two (nos. 241 and 242) may possibly be by Nāmdev and Raidās respectively. Two extra śloks by Kabīr are included in the bhagat bānī of Rag Marū, AG p. 1105. There are also three longer works: the Bavan Akharī (AG pp. 340-3), the Thintī (pp. 343-4), and the "Seven Days" (pp. 344-5). A number of śloks are to be found in vars (AG, pp. 509, 555, 947, 948), but all of these are duplicated in the collection at the end of the AG.

accepted as authentic.¹

The background and structure of Kabīr's thought has been well analysed in recent works by Dr. Charlotte Vaudeville.² The basis of his sādhana was not, as has been commonly supposed, Vaiṣṇava bhakti or Sūfism but tantric yoga. Kabīr's name is certainly a Muslim one, but it has always been clear that his knowledge of Islam was relatively slight. In contrast to this there is a wealth of Haṭha-yoga terminology and a thought structure with obvious resemblances to that of the Nāths. In the light of this contrast the theory that Kabīr belonged to a caste which had recently been converted from tantric yoga to Islam is at once convincing.

Kabīr was, however, far from being a Nāth yogī. To this background he brought elements from Vaiṣṇava bhakti and from Sūfism. His debt to the bhagats is evident in the primacy accorded to love, and to the Sūfīs in his concept of such love as a way of suffering. These and other elements from the same sources he compounded with his own mystical nature and produced the synthesis which is the distinctive religion of Kabīr. It is a religion which in true sant style renounces all that is mechanical or external, affirming as valid only that which may be experienced inwardly. Within a man's

¹Rabindranath Tagore, One Hundred Poems of Kabir.

²Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabir (UNESCO, 1959), Kabir Granthavali (Doha) (Pondichery, 1957), and an article "Kabir and Interior Religion" in History of Religions, vol. 3, no. 2, Winter 1964, pp. 191-201.

soul God may, by grace, reveal Himself to him who is prepared for the revelation. The way of preparation is the path of love, a love addressed directly to the supreme Lord who is both transcendent and immanent, and a love which will inevitably involve long periods in the anguish of separation. Few will have the courage to undertake it and fewer still the persistence to follow it to the point of revelation. The point at which the revelation occurs cannot be foreseen. It comes at the divine initiative and it comes with suddenness. God, the Satguru, discharges the arrow of the Śabad and man is slain in order that in death he may find true life. This life is to be discovered in mystical union, an ineffable experience of dissolution in the divine.¹

There is inevitably much that must remain obscure in Kabīr's attempts to describe his experiences, for they were of a fundamentally mystical quality and, as Kabīr himself repeats, ultimately inexpressible. There is also a degree of philosophical inconsistency in his utterances. In his efforts to impart some impression of his mystical experience he has frequent recourse to monistic terminology, but he uses it in senses which are his own. Monistic concepts certainly influenced him, but it is clear

¹Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr, pp. 25-37.

from the nature of his relationship with God that his thought must be regarded as monotheistic, not monistic.¹ The works of Kabīr represent the highly personal record of an individual experience, but they nevertheless place him well within the framework of sant beliefs.

It was this sant tradition which provided the basis of Gurū Nānak's religious thought, an inheritance which, like Kabīr, he reinterpreted in the light of his own personality and experience. This is not to suggest he should be regarded as in any sense a disciple of Kabīr. There is no sound evidence to support the popular tradition that Gurū Nānak met Kabīr, and little to suggest that he knew any of his works.² There can, however, be no doubt that the sant tradition was by far the most important element in all that he inherited from the past or absorbed from contemporary circumstances. The basic sant assumptions are his assumptions, and the categories in which he expresses his thought are sant categories. And yet Gurū Nānak was no ordinary sant. It is sant thought which we find in his works, but it is sant thought reinterpreted. The result is a new synthesis, a synthesis which is cast within the pattern of sant belief but which nevertheless possesses a significant

¹Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr, pp. 221-2. For an interpretation of Kabīr's thought as consistently monistic see Krishna Sharma, Early Indian Bhakti with special reference to Kabīr, thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London, December 1964.

²See Appendix 4, pp. 640-46.

originality and, in terms of its sant background, a unique clarity. It possesses, moreover, the quality of survival, for it remains today the substance of a living faith.

THE SOURCES

Evidence of European interest in Gurū Nānak and Sikhism first appears towards the end of the eighteenth century. The earliest known accounts of the Sikhs by European observers are papers prepared by A. L. H. Polier and Charles Wilkins in 1780 and 1781 respectively. These were followed by a letter written in 1783 by George Forster and published as part of the author's A Journey from Bengal to England in 1798, and an account by James Browne written in or soon after 1785 and published as one of his India Tracts in 1788.¹ All of these writers refer to Gurū Nānak, but with the exception of Forster they do so briefly and inaccurately. Forster's account, however, is a surprisingly accurate summary of the current traditions concerning the Gurū.

Malcolm's Sketch of the Sikhs was published in 1812, the first in a series of books on the Sikhs by British army officers.

¹The accounts by Polier, Wilkins, and Browne have been printed or reprinted, each with an individual introduction, in Dr. Ganḍā Singh's Early European Accounts of the Sikhs. Dr. Ganḍā Singh's collection also includes a letter said to be by Forster (loc.cit., pp. 77-87) but, as the editor points out, it is not the same as the letter which appears in A Journey from Bengal to England (Letter XI, 2nd edition, vol. i, pp. 291-6). It appears to be an inaccurate summary of the published letter.

During the first half of the nineteenth century this group included H. T. Prinsep (1834),¹ H. Steinbach (1845), W. L. M'Gregor (1846), and J. D. Cunningham (1849).² With the exception of Prinsep all of these writers include accounts of the life and teachings of Gurū Nānak, but their works are primarily military and diplomatic histories. For their treatment of Gurū Nānak they rely upon traditionnal accounts, tempered with a certain element of scepticism. An effort to develop a specifically religious understanding of Sikhism was made by H. H. Wilson in 1848.³ It amounted, however, to little more than a culling of appropriate references from Malcolm, Prinsep, and the travel accounts of a number of Europeans who had visited the Pañjāb.⁴

¹ Prinsep's Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab was based upon the posthumous report of another officer, Captain Murray.

² Two anonymous works appeared in 1846. A History of the Punjab published in two volumes from London was a reissue of Prinsep's book with fourteen extra chapters added. The account which it gives of Gurū Nānak in Chapter 4 follows Malcolm. The History of the Sikhs, "compiled from authentic sources", was published in Calcutta. The portion dealing with Gurū Nānak is an exact copy of Malcolm.

³ 'A Summary Account of the Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs', published in the JRAS, vol. ix, pp. 43-59. Wilson had also included a brief section on the Sikhs in his Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus (1846), p.173.

⁴ Moorcroft, Burnes, Jacquemont, and von Hügel.

In 1877 there appeared Trumpp's The Ādi Granth, a work which soon acquired a baleful reputation. It is not necessary to read far in order to appreciate the reason for its disrepute.

The Sikh Granth is a very big volume, but incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects. It is for us Occidentals a most painful and almost stupefying task, to read only a single Rāg, and I doubt if any ordinary reader will have the patience to proceed to the second Rāg, after he shall have perused the first. It would therefore be a mere waste of paper to add also the minor Rāgs, which only repeat, in endless variations, what has already been said in the great Rāgs over and over again, without adding the least to our knowledge.¹

The purpose of the book had been to provide, under government auspices, a translation of the Sikh scriptures. In this respect Trumpp's work was an almost complete failure. Neither his understanding of the language of the Ādi Granth nor his powers of English expression were equal to the task, and his efforts were informed by the hostility which he so openly expressed in his preface. His translations have accordingly received little attention and the loss has been negligible.

This, however, concerns his translations of selected passages from the Ādi Granth. In addition to his Ādi Granth translations Trumpp also provided a number of introductory essays. These essays

¹E. Trumpp, loc.cit., p.vii.

reflect the same intemperate judgment, but his examination of the historical evidence concerning the life of Gurū Nānak shows that he was by no means devoid of insight. Trumpp's manifest lack of sympathy vitiated his whole approach, but he did at least appreciate the need for critical analysis in any effort to evaluate the traditional versions of Gurū Nānak's life. He was aware of the need and in his own extreme way he sought to apply it.

Trumpp was followed in 1909 by Macauliffe, whose avowed intention was to repair the harm done by his predecessor.¹ In this respect he succeeded handsomely. Later writers have relied heavily upon him and his work has enjoyed a reputation which remains to this day.

It is, however, a reputation which should be qualified.² In the first place, his approach is uncritical. Macauliffe's first volume offers us not an authentic biography, but a life of Gurū Nānak as recorded in tradition. This was in accordance with his declared purpose³ and he is in no sense to be blamed for it, but it is nevertheless an approach which seriously limits the value of his account.

¹M. A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, i.vii.

²The criticisms which follow concern the first volume of The Sikh Religion, not the complete work.

³M. A. Macauliffe, op.cit., i.xvi.

Secondly, he fails to give his sources for the various incidents which he describes. Macauliffe used the traditional biographies of Gurū Nānak, which are called janam-sākhīs.¹ These janam-sākhīs vary considerably in reliability and for this reason it is important to know which of them has been used at any particular point in the narrative. It is true that he uses as the basis of his account one of the better janam-sākhīs but, as he acknowledges, the basis has been supplemented "by cullings from the later lives of the Guru".² These additions are numerous³ and in some cases he uses them to replace material contained in his basic janam-sākhī.

Thirdly, he does not indicate the points at which he has himself inserted additional material in order to bring a janam-sākhī account into line with historical possibility. An example of this occurs on page 52 where he refers to a meeting with "a successor of Shaikh Sharaf". In the janam-sākhīs the discourse which Macauliffe relates is said to have been conducted with Shaikh Sharaf himself. None of them refers to a successor.⁴

¹Literally 'birth evidences' or 'evidences of his life'. The janam-sākhīs are traditional biographies, each consisting of a series of separate incidents, or chapters, entitled sākhīs. See infra pp. 65 ff.

²M. A. Macauliffe, op.cit., i.lxxxvii. For the janam-sākhī used by Macauliffe as his basis see infra pp. 84-93 passim.

³See infra pp. 279-88.

⁴Cf also Macauliffe, op.cit., i.84.

Fourthly, there is no indication of the points at which material which is to be found in the basic *janam-sākhī* has been omitted in order to rationalise the account. In many cases Macauliffe follows the common practice of omitting the miraculous and accepting the residue.¹ If there is no residue he drops the incident altogether.²

Macauliffe's study of Gurū Nānak retains a value, but only if there is an awareness of its limitations. It offers a coherent synthesis of all but one of the more important *janam-sākhī* traditions³ and in this respect it remains unexcelled. It cannot, however, be regarded as authentic biography. For this it is necessary to turn once again to the primary sources from which Macauliffe and other writers have drawn their material. These are the *Ādi Granth*, compiled by Gurū Arjan in AD 1603-4,⁴ and the *Pañjābī janam-sākhīs*.

THE ĀDI GRANTH

The *Ādi Granth* provides us with surprisingly little information concerning the life of Gurū Nānak. It contains more

¹For examples see the incidents described on pp. i.71f, 73f, 129f, 152f, and 153f.

²E.g. the city of insects. (See *infra* p.287, no. 105.)

³Macauliffe did not have access to the *Miharbān Janam-sākhī*.

⁴See Appendix 1, pp. 607 ff.

than nine hundred of his compositions and yet the biographical details which may be extracted from them are negligible. Indeed, there is no explicit reference at all to any definite incident in his life, no pad or ślok which points unmistakably to an event in which he was directly involved. Even the famous references to Bābur, the so-called Bābar-vāṇī,¹ are not exceptions to this rule. They do indicate that Gurū Nānak witnessed something of Bābur's depredations, but if read apart from the janam-sākhīs they do not necessarily point to his presence at the sack of Saidpur.

As far as biographical detail is concerned the most we can do is draw some limited conclusions from the more obvious hints which Gurū Nānak's writings contain. In the case of the Bābar-vāṇī we may confidently assume that he witnessed something of the devastation caused by Bābur's army and that accordingly he was in the Pañjāb during at least one of the incursions into Hindustān. In the same manner we may deduce with confidence that he had frequent contact with Nāth yogīs. The extensive use of their terminology and the frequent instances in which a yogī appears to be addressed directly make this aspect of his life perfectly plain.

¹See infra p. 414.

We may also deduce from his works that he must have been a person of gentle disposition, for his criticisms of contemporary society express deep conviction without resorting to violent or intemperate language. In this respect Gurū Nānak compares favourably with Kabīr, whose scorn is plainly evident and whose pungent expression occasionally descends to the virulent. Gurū Nānak could also be critical of brahmanical pretensions and of social evils arising out of caste distinctions, but he expressed his convictions with a moderation which did nothing to reduce their effectiveness. It has been suggested that his lack of vehemence was a result of his having been born into a caste status which spared him the indignities experienced by Kabīr.¹ This, however, ignores the fact that Raidās, whose social status was even lower than that of Kabīr, manifested the same quality of gentleness as Gurū Nānak. There seems to be no doubt that the quality was in both cases an expression of their individual natures. Dādū is another example of a low-caste bhagat whose work is marked by an absence of anger and turbulence.²

This does not take us very far, but it appears that we can go no further. We may proceed to deduce from his works that Gurū

¹Hazārī Prasād Dvivedī, Hindī Sāhitya, p.150.

²Dvivedī, op.cit., pp. 144-5, argues that in Dādū's case the absence of vehemence was because Kabīr had "cleared away the brambles" and left him with "a very clear plain". This accords Kabīr a degree of success far greater than that which he actually achieved.

Nānak attached no importance to caste¹ and that he did not insist on vegetarianism,² but in doing so we move towards what may more appropriately be regarded as doctrine rather than biography per se. The conclusions we are able to draw are certainly of value, but their scope is obviously very limited.

Gurū Nānak himself tells us little and his four successors, whose works are also recorded in the Ādi Granth, add nothing of any importance. Gurū Aṅgad and Gurū Arjan both refer to him,³ but their references are all eulogistic comments, entirely appropriate in their contexts but telling us nothing about Gurū Nānak himself. The same applies to the savayyas of the bhatts.⁴ Gurū Nānak is mentioned several times,⁵ but as one would expect from

¹Gurū Nānak, Sirī Rāgu kī Vār, ślok 1 of paurī 3, AG p.83; Āsā 3, AG p.349; Gujarī Aṣṭ.4(1), AG p.504; Tilāṅg 2, AG p.721.

²Gurū Nānak, Vār Malār, ślok 2 of paurī 25, AG pp. 1289-90.

³Gurū Aṅgad, Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 27, AG p.150. Gurū Arjan, Sorāṭhi 13 and 14, AG p.612; Marū 10, AG p.1001; Basant Dutukīā 1, AG p.1192.

⁴See Appendix 1, p. 608.

⁵Rai Balvaṇḍ and Sattā the Dūm, Vār Rāmakaḷī (1-2), AG p.966. Kal the Poet, Savayye Mahale Pahile ke (7), AG p.1390; Savayye Mahale Tije ke (1), AG p.1392; Savayye Mahale Chauthe ke (12), AG p.1398. Nal the Poet, Savayye Mahale Chauthe ke (4), AG p.1399.

the nature of the savayyas these references also are pure panegyric. The only work which offers any detail at all is the Vār in Rāg Rāmakalī by the bhaṭṭs Rāi Balvaṇḍ and Sattā the Ḍum. In the first four paupīs the authors repeat a single fact, namely that Gurū Nānak appointed Aṅgad as his successor.

Sikhān putrān ghokhi kai sabha umati vekhahu
jikhionu.
Jān sudhosu tān Lahapā jikhionu.¹

Behold, all Sikhs²! See what he did, how he tested his Sikhs and his sons, and invested Lahipā³ when he had proved his fitness.

This is the extent of the Ādi Granth's witness to the life of Gurū Nānak and clearly it falls far short of what we need.

THE JANAM-SĀKHĪS

Introduction

The janam-sākhīs are also highly unsatisfactory sources, but for an entirely different reason. Here there is no question of material being in short supply, for the janam-sākhīs provide it in abundance. The problem as far as the janam-sākhīs are concerned is to determine how much of their material can be accepted as historical. A very substantial proportion of it is obviously

¹Vār Rāmakalī (4), AG p.967.

²Sabh umati: "all (members of the) community".

³Gurū Aṅgad. See infra pp. 429-30.

legend and much of what cannot be summarily dismissed in this way is open to grave suspicion on other grounds. In a number of cases, however, there is an evident possibility that some historical fact may lie beneath a superstructure of myth. Not all of these possibilities can be satisfactorily tested, but our task must be to examine them all and wherever possible to affirm or reject them. There is no other way to reconstruct the life of Gurū Nānak. In spite of their manifest shortcomings we are bound to rely on the janam-sākhīs for almost all of our information as there is nothing to replace them and little to supplement them. There is no piece of external evidence which can be accorded complete trust and, as we have already noted, such indications as his own works contain are at best only hints. The Dabistān, which of all non-Sikh works containing references to Gurū Nānak lies nearest to his time, is no nearer than the older janam-sākhīs and it is clear that Mohsin Fānī relied largely upon Sikh informants.¹ Much of the chapter in the Dabistān entitled "Nānak-panthis" deals with the life of Gurū Nānak, but

¹The Persian Dabistān-i-Mazāhib was written in the mid-seventeenth century and is generally attributed to Mohsin Fānī. It appears that the author was personally acquainted with Gurū Hargobind, the sixth Gurū, and he explicitly claims a close acquaintance with Gurū Hari Rai, the seventh Gurū. (Gaṇḍā Singh, Nanak Panthis, pp. 13, 21.) The Dabistān was translated into English by David Shea and Anthony Troyer in 1843. Their translation is, however, an imperfect one and its imperfections are particularly evident in the chapter on the Nānak-panthis or Sikhs. Another translation of this one chapter has been made by Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh. It was published in the Journal of Indian History, vol. xix, part 2, and reprinted under the title Nanak Panthis or Sikhs and Sikhism of the 17th Century (Madras, 1939).

the account which it gives of him amounts to little more than a series of legends. At one point it does offer significant support to a janam-sākhī tradition,¹ but as far as Gurū Nānak is concerned it is important more as a description of the seventeenth century Sikh understanding of him than as a contribution to authentic biography.

Independent traditions concerning the life of Gurū Nānak did of course emerge, but there is no indication that any of them possessed more than the remotest of connections with historical fact. Beyond the Pañjāb Gurū Nānak's name became a part of the hagiography of the later bhakti movement. Mahīpati's Bhaktalīlāmrit, written in AD 1774, testifies to both the extent and the nature of his reputation.

Whoever shows some wonderful event, be he a bhakta of God or the chief of the yogīs, his reputation spreads widely and others continue the history of his sect. Hence in that country there are many bairāgis belonging to the sect of Nānak who give the mantra to the people and make the dull and ignorant remember God.

If one listens to the lives of the saints, his greatest sins are burnt away; the giver of salvation is pleased with him, and keeps him in the world of Vaikunth.²

¹The tradition that Gurū Nānak was for a period employed as a steward by Daulat Khan Lodi. Gaṇḍa Singh, op.cit., p.4. See infra p.350.

²Mahīpati, Bhaktalīlāmrit, "The Story of Nānak" 177-9, translated from the Marāṭhī by J. E. Abbott, N. R. Godbole, and J. F. Edwards, p. 195.

For Mahīpati Gurū Nānak was one of the great bhagats, and his chapter "The Story of Nānak" is a collection of appropriate legends. Muslim writers also referred to him, but apart from the Dabistan their interest appears to have developed later and to have been, for the most part, a polemical one. Colonel Malcolm, who collected the material for his Sketch of the Sikhs in 1805, refers to the existence of Muslim accounts of Gurū Nānak, but dismisses them as efforts to misrepresent and denigrate.¹ In other cases the concern of Muslim writers was evidently to claim Gurū Nānak as a believer in the doctrines of Islam.²

These independent traditions are valueless as sources of authentic information and accordingly we are bound to rely on the intensely interesting but largely unreliable janam-sākhīs for practically all our information concerning the life of Gurū Nānak. The best we can hope to do is to discern the historically possible in the midst of accumulated legend, and to test such possibilities against whatever criteria may be available. The outcome must inevitably be that there is little we can affirm

¹J. Malcolm, loc.cit., pp.4-5.

²An example of this interpretation appears in Ghulām Husain Khān's Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin, trans. J. Briggs, vol. i, pp. 110-111. The Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin was written about the year AD 1785.

concerning the details of his life. There can, however, be no question concerning the basic facts that he was born in the Pañjāb almost five hundred years ago, spent a period in travel, composed the works which are attributed to him in the Ādi Granth, and ensured the perpetuation of his teachings by appointing a successor. These are beyond all doubt.

The precise manner in which the janam-sākhīs developed is not known for certain, but it is possible to reconstruct a probable pattern. The beginnings would be the remembered facts about the Gurū which would have circulated orally among the first generation of his followers. With the passage of time these facts would inevitably be embellished by reverent imaginations and practically all of them would undergo gradual change.

It would be remembered, for example, that the Gurū had spent many years travelling outside the Pañjāb. Some of the places he had visited might well be known, but it is unlikely that there would be any reliable knowledge of his complete itinerary. There would doubtless be many gaps in the account and these would soon be filled with the names of places which such a traveller would be expected to visit. These would include the important centres of pilgrimage, both Hindu and Muslim, and names which already figured prominently in stories current in the Pañjāb. This is not to say that Gurū Nānak did not visit any of these places. On the contrary

it is safe to assume that he must surely have visited at least some of them. The point here is that in many cases the name of a certain town or locality will have been added to the collection of śākhīs, not because there existed any reliable information about it, but because the popular imagination believed that he must surely have visited such a place on his travels. In many, indeed most cases, it is impossible to say with anything approaching certainty that he did or did not visit a particular place. Even when the incident which is located in a certain setting is manifestly unhistorical it does not necessarily follow that Gurū Nānak did not pass that way. On the other hand, the fact that an incident bears the marks of probability does not necessarily mean that the location given in the janam-śākhī is the correct one.

In addition to these remembered facts and their embellishments, stories would have gathered around certain references in his works. It seems clear that this must have happened in the case of Var Rāmakaṭī, śloks 2-7 of paupī 12.¹ In these six śloks, as they appear in the Ādi Granth, Gurū Nānak speaks successively as Īsar, Gorakh, Gopīchand, Charapaṭ, Bharatharī, and finally himself. The śloks were evidently intended for Kanphaṭ yogīs and this would

¹AG, pp. 952-3.

explain the names used.¹ Subsequently these names must have suggested that Gurū Nānak had actually met these renowned figures and as a result there would have developed the story of his discourse with the Siddhs on Mount Sumeru which we find in paurīs 28-31 of Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1,² sākhi 50 of the Purātan Janam-sākhi,³ and gost 117 of the Miharbān Janam-sākhi.⁴ Other similar pads would have assisted the process, notably Rāmakalī 4,⁵ which refers to Gorakhnāth, and Rāmakalī 5,⁶ which mentions Machhendranāth. In the Purātan janam-sākhis these two pads are responsible for a separate sākhi involving the two Nāths,⁷ but in the Miharbān Janam-sākhi they are a part of the lengthy discourse

¹Gorakhnāth, Gopināth, and Charapaṭnāth appear in the first of the lists of the nine Nāths given by G. W. Briggs, Gorakhnāth and the Kānpaṭa Yogīs, p.136. Bharatharī, or Bhartṛhari, is said to have been a disciple of Gorakhnāth and to have founded the Bairāg sub-sect of the Kānpaṭ order. According to tradition he was a king of Ujjain who abdicated his throne to become a yogī. Ibid., p.65.

²See infra pp. 179-81.

³Pur JS, pp. 94-7.

⁴Mih JS, pp. 384-91.

⁵AG, p.877.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Pur JS, sākhi 46, pp. 84-6.

on Mount Sumeru which extends from gost 117 to gost 124.¹

Obviously there can be no question of historical truth in the story for Gurū Nānak and Gorakhnāth certainly were not contemporaries. The only evident explanation is that a general acceptance of the Gorakhnāthī belief in the immortal existence of the eighty-four Siddhs in the fastnesses of the Hīmalayas combined with these references in Gurū Nānak's works to produce a story of his having visited them there. The difference between the Purātan and Miharban accounts indicates that there must have been an evolution over a period of time, but there seems to be no doubt that the real genesis of the story lay in these pads and śloks which were originally addressed to Nāth yogīs.

Another such example appears to be Kauḍa Rakhas di sakhī, or "the story of Kauḍa the Savage",² in which the crux is a cauldron (karāhā) which refuses to boil. The pad which is incorporated in the sakhī includes the line:

Tapata karāhā bujhi gaiā Guri sītala nāmu dīo.³

The heat of the cauldron has subsided for the Gurū
has imparted the cooling Nām.

¹Mih JS, pp. 384-413. The discourse also includes Āsā 37 and 38 (AG, pp. 359-60), both of which refer to Bharatharī. (Op.cit., pp. 405-9)

²Pur JS, sakhī 44, pp.81-2.

³Rāg Mārū, Mahalā 5, 14, AG p.1002.

This pad is by Gurū Arjan, not by Gurū Nānak. The 'cauldron' he refers to is obviously the man,¹ but read in a literal sense the line fits the story of Kauḍā the Savage very well. It is possible that the pad was subsequently attached to the sākhī because of this appropriate reference and the fact that the Miharbān Janam-sākhī omits the pad could conceivably suggest this explanation.² It seems more likely, however, that the sākhī developed out of the pad and that Miharbān dropped the pad because he realised it was not by Gurū Nānak. Miharbān does occasionally attribute the works of later Gurūs to Gurū Nānak, but not with the same frequency as the other janam-sākhīs. Moreover, there is, as we shall see, some excuse for the errors which Miharbān makes in this respect.

Other examples are Miharbān's goṣṭ 37³ and the pad Malār 8⁴ which share a common reference to a heron; goṣṭ 76⁵ and Surplus Śloks 30⁶ where the connection is a lotus; goṣṭ 86⁷ and Mārū 4,⁸

¹For man see infra pp. 531-41.

²Mih JS, goṣṭ 71, p.231.

³Ibid., pp. 112-4.

⁴AG, p.1257.

⁵Mih JS, pp. 251-3.

⁶AG, p.1412. Many of the śloks composed by the Gurūs were incorporated by Gurū Arjan in the various vars which occur throughout the AG. The remainder were grouped at the very end of the AG (pp.1410 ff) under the heading salok varān te vadhik, "śloks left over from the vars" or "Surplus Śloks".

⁷Mih JS, pp. 276-9.

⁸AG, p.990.

both of which concern a frog; and gost 108¹ and Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paupī 23,² where the link is the word marū (an un-irrigated wasteland). As we shall see in the detailed examination of individual sākhīs it is quite possible that the famous story of Sajjan the Thag owes its origin to this particular process. The same pad did not, however, always produce the same story. In the Purātan janam-sākhīs Basant 3,³ which concerns the futility of purified cooking squares, is directed to a scrupulous brāhmaṇ who had sought to construct a cooking square of unimpeachable purity,⁴ whereas in the Miharbān Janam-sākhī it appears in a discourse with some Vaiṣṇavas by the Ganges, also on the subject of cooking squares.⁵

In this way remembered facts, devout imaginations, suggestive references in the bānī,⁶ and the mutations which inevitably result from oral repetition must have combined to create a stock of sākhīs or isolated incidents concerning the life of Gurū Nānak.

¹Mih JS, pp. 358-60.

²AG, p.148.

³Ibid., p.1169.

⁴Pur JS, sākhī 38, p.72.

⁵Mih JS, gost 41, pp. 120-3. Cf also: Pur JS, sākhī 21, pp. 31-2; Mih JS, gost 88, p.287. See supra 248 . Ibid., gost 90, p.294. See supra p.249. Ibid., gost 107, p.357.

⁶Literally: word, speech. In this context bānī or gurbānī refers to the compositions of the Gurūs.

The next step would be to group a number of these sākhīs into some sort of chronological pattern and to give the pattern a measure of stability by committing the selected sākhīs to writing. Such a selection would still be open to alteration, but to a much lesser extent than was inevitably the case while the sākhīs were still circulating orally. A selection once recorded would be copied, the copy would be copied, and so a tradition would be established, though still subject to modification by drawing on the oral stock, or perhaps on a different written tradition.

The manuscripts which we now possess are evidently the products of the latter stage in this evolution, being copies of earlier collections rather than original compilations. They fall into three recognisable, though overlapping, traditions:

1. The Purāṭan tradition.
2. The Miharbān tradition.
3. The Bhāi Bālā tradition.

To these should be added the Gyān-ratanāvalī, a janam-sākhī attributed to Nanī Singh which offers an independent selection, but which does not appear to have developed an independent tradition.

Of the four, the least reliable is the Bhāi Bālā tradition, but its influence has been immense. Ever since the days of Macauliffe it is the Purāṭan tradition which has been accorded the greatest measure of reliability and which has been used as the basis

of all the better biographies. There is now reason to believe that this opinion should be revised and that the Miharbān Janam-sākhi, hitherto rejected as sectarian polemic, should be regarded as the most reliable of the four. This description is, however, a relative one. It should not be taken to imply anything resembling consistent reliability.

One important work which does not fit easily into this classification is the first Vār¹ of Bhāi Gurdās. It is not a janam-sākhi in the normally accepted sense as apart from four incidents it offers very little information about Gurū Nānak's life. Insofar as it does present a pattern it accords with the Miharbān Janam-sākhi, but the two could not be said to belong to a common tradition. The primary purpose of this Vār is to extol the greatness of the first six Gurūs and to serve this purpose in the case of Gurū Nānak Bhāi Gurdās has made a very limited selection from the available material. In this qualified sense it may be referred to as a janam-sākhi, but it would be unduly optimistic to expect from the relevant paurīs more than the barest sketch of the Gurū's life. Nevertheless, it certainly warrants our closest attention because of its relative nearness to the time of Gurū Nānak, and no treatment of the janam-sākhīs would be complete without it.

¹ Usually an heroic ode of several paurīs, or stanzas.

Bhai Gurdas's Var 1

For much of what we know concerning Bhai Gurdas we are bound to rely on Santokh Singh's Suraj Prakās. This must prompt a certain degree of caution as far as the details of his life are concerned,¹ but there is nothing to suggest that the traditional outline of it should be challenged. Bhai Gurdas is said to have been a nephew of Gurū Amar Dās and accordingly a cousin of Gurū Arjan's mother.² The date of his birth is not known, but S.1636 (AD 1579) is given as the year in which Gurū Rām Dās admitted him to the Panth. He was then despatched to Āgrā as a missionary, an interlude which was evidently responsible for the considerable Braj content of his Kabitt Savayye. Gurū Arjan subsequently summoned him back to the Pañjāb and retained him as his amanuensis during the compilation of the Ādi Granth.³ After Gurū Arjan's death he became a trusted follower of Gurū Hargobind. His death is said to have taken place in Goindval⁴ in S.1694 (AD 1637).⁵

¹Santokh Singh's Nānak Prakās and Sūraj Prakās are not historically reliable. (Macauliffe i.lxxvi-lxxvii; MK, p.183. See infra p.150.) For a brief account of Bhai Gurdas's life see Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, pp. 310-2.

²See Appendix 5, p. 647

³See Appendix 1, p. 607

⁴Amritsar District.

⁵MK, p.311. Khushwant Singh, op.cit., p.311, gives 1629.

Bhāī Gurdās's thirty-nine Vārs¹ and, to a lesser extent, his 556 Kabitts are of considerable interest as an exposition of contemporary Sikh belief, but they contain relatively little biographical material. As far as Gurū Nānak is concerned much material is confined to Var 1, pauris 23-45, and Var 11, pauris 13-14.² Other direct references to him are to be found in Var 24: 1-4 and Var 26: 16, 30-31, but with the exception of a line from Var 24: 1 which refers to his residence in Kartārpur,³ and another from Var 24: 4 which describes the levelling of caste within the community established by the Gurū, their content is exclusively eulogistic.

¹The published editions of the Vārs include forty, but the last of these is by a later writer of the same name. Khushwant Singh, op.cit., p.312.

²The other portions which furnish some historical material are:

1: 17-22)	The evil times which preceded the birth of Gurū Nānak.
1: 45-48		
24: 5-25)	The five Gurūs who succeeded Gurū Nānak.
3: 12		
20: 1)	The 'apostolic succession' of the six Gurūs - the doctrine that the Gurū is one although his spirit has passed through six bodies.
26: 34		
38: 20		
39: 2-3		
11: 14-31)	The names of prominent Sikhs who lived during the time of the five succeeding Gurūs.

³See infra p. 422, n.1.

According to the Gyān-ratanāvalī, Vār 1 was written in response to a request made by some Sikhs "at the time when the fifth Master established the canon of Srī Granth Sāhib", which would mean in, or soon after, AD 1604. As we shall see, however, it is impossible to accord reliability to the introductory section which contains this statement.¹ Professor Kirpāl Singh argues that the Vār must have been written after AD 1628 as paurī 48 contains, with reference to Gurū Hargobind, the line:

Dalabhañjan guru sūramā vaḍa jodhā bahu paraupakārī.

(This) heroic Gurū was a conqueror of armies, a mighty warrior and one supremely generous.

This, he maintains, indicates that it must have been written after the sixth Gurū had been involved in warfare. His first struggle was against Shahjahan and is believed to have taken place in AD 1628.² Such an argument can, however, apply only to the paurī in which the line occurs for there is no indication that the Vārs were composed as complete units.

The only safe conclusion is that the twenty-three paurīs would have been composed before AD 1637. They may well have been written appreciably earlier, but there is no trustworthy evidence which establishes this beyond doubt and the legendary details which

¹See infra p. 104.

²Mih JS, Introductory Essays, p.82.

they contain suggest a later rather than an earlier date.

The most we can say with assurance is that this brief account of Gurū Nanak's life was written at some time during a period extending from the close of the sixteenth century to the year 1637, a period which began sixty years after the Gurū's death and ended one hundred years after that date.

The Purātan Janam-sakhīs

The term Purātan Janam-sakhī, or "Ancient Janam-sakhī", is open to some misunderstanding as it has been used in two different senses. Strictly speaking it designates no single known work, but rather a small group of janam-sakhīs which are clearly from a common source which has never been found. It is, however, generally used with reference to the composite work which was compiled by Bhai Vir Singh and first published in 1926. The usage in this present study corresponds to the second of these meanings. The first of them is covered by the plural Purātan janam-sakhīs or by the term 'the Purātan tradition'.

Vir Singh's edition is an amalgam of three Purātan janam-sakhīs. Their differences are not as insignificant as he indicates in his introduction,¹ but the manuscripts which he uses are never-

¹Pur JS, page a.

theless very close to each other and their grouping under a single title is obviously justified. The three versions which Vīr Singh used to prepare his edition were:

1. The Colebrooke Janam-sākhi.
2. The Hafizabad Janam-sākhi.
3. A Purātan manuscript in the possession of Khālsā College, Amritsar.¹

Of these three, the first two provided practically all of his material. The first edition of 1926 was evidently confined to the Colebrooke and Hafizabad Janam-sākhis. The Khālsā College manuscript was used only for the second and third editions, and then only where gaps in the text of the first two made a third source necessary.²

1. The Colebrooke, or Valāitvālī Janam-sākhi.

Dr. Trumpp has recorded in the introduction to his The Ādi Granth the manner in which the manuscript of the Colebrooke Janam-sākhi was discovered.

¹See infra p. 333.

²Fur JS, page k. There is, however, one very significant place where the editor was obliged to have recourse to this third Ms. The last folio of the Colebrooke Ms has been seriously damaged and in the case of the Hafizabad Ms it was evidently missing altogether. (Gurmukh Singh, Introduction to Macauliffe's edition, p. 9). The date given for Guru Nānak's death (S.1595, Asū sudī 10) has, however, survived in the Colebrooke text.

After my return to Europe in 1872, some manuscripts of the Granth were forwarded to me from the India Office Library, for the prosecution of my labours, and to these some other Gurmukhī manuscripts were added, in the expectation that the one or the other might prove useful in my researches. In looking them over, I found an old manuscript, partly destroyed by white ants, the early characters of which, resembling those of the old copy of the Granth, preserved at Kartarpur, and signed by Guru Arjun himself, at once caught my eye. On the first leaf it contained in Sanskrit letters the short title, Nānak kā Granth Janamasākhī kā, A book of Nānak, referring to his birth (or life). The copy had been presented to the Library of the East India House, according to the entry on the first leaf, by the famous H. T. Colebrooke, without his being aware, as it appears, of the contents of the book. As soon as I commenced to read the book, I observed with great pleasure, that this was a description of the life of Nānak quite different from all the others I had hitherto seen. As the characters, so also was the idiom, in which it was composed, old and in many words and expressions agreeing with the diction of Guru Arjun.

It is not known how the manuscript came into Colebrooke's hands, but it seems probable that he must have delivered it to East India House in, or shortly after, 1815. It was in that year that he returned from India and it was soon after his return that he presented his collection of Sanskrit manuscripts to the East India Company.² The likelihood is that the Gurmukhī manuscript was handed over at the same time.

¹Loc.cit., p.ii. The Ms is IO Library Ms Panj. B6.

²Dictionary of National Biography (1887 edition), p.285.

Trumpp's work was published in 1877 and his information aroused the interest of Sikh scholars in the Pañjāb. In 1883 some Amritsar Sikhs petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor of the Pañjāb, Sir Charles Aitcheson, to have the manuscript brought to India for inspection. The petition was granted and in the autumn of the same year the manuscript was sent to the Pañjāb and made available for scrutiny in Lahore and Amritsar.¹ Learning of the Sikhs' desire to have it photographed, Sir Charles made arrangements to have this done at government expense. The manuscript was photographed and printed by means of a zincographic process in 1885 and copies were given to selected institutions as gifts.²

In the meantime the Lahore Singh Sabhā had made a copy from the manuscript and this had been lithographed in Lahore in 1884.³ This is the janam-sākhī which is variously called the Colebrooke Janam-sākhī or the Valāitvālī Janam-sākhī. The original manuscript is incomplete as leaves 2-6 inclusive, 18 and 19, and two of the three leaves 12, 13 and 14 are missing.⁴ The text of

¹The preface to the Lahore Singh Sabhā edition mentions only Amritsar.

²Photozincograph Facsimile, prefatory Note, p.iii; Gurmukh Singh, Introduction to Macauliffe's edition of the Hafizabād JS, pp.3-4; Pur JS, Introduction, pp. u-a. There are copies in the BM and the IO Library.

³There is a copy in the IO Library (Panj.30.E.2).

⁴Photozincograph Facsimile, prefatory Note, p.iii.

the latter four leaves is supplied by the Hafizabad Janam-Sakhī, but there is no indication of what leaves 2-6 contained.

2. The Hafizābād, or Macauliffe Janam-sākhī.

In the same year that the photozincograph facsimiles of the Colebrooke Janam-sākhī were produced Macauliffe published another version of the same janam-sākhī. This version had been acquired the previous year in the town of Hafizābād by Bhāi Gurmukh Singh of Oriental College, Lahore. Gurmukh Singh passed the manuscript on to Macauliffe who divided off the individual words and had it lithographed at his own expense.¹ The version was designated the Hafizābād Janam-sākhī by Gurmukh Singh and this is its usual title, but it has also been referred to as the Macauliffe Janam-sākhī. Gurmukh Singh reported in his introduction to the lithographed edition that there were pages missing from the end of the manuscript and that Macauliffe had used the Colebrooke Janam-sākhī to complete the edition.²

¹Gurmukh Singh writes in his Introduction to Macauliffe's edition, pp. 4-5, that the Ms came into the possession of Sardar Jawāhar Singh, a police officer in Hafizābād, District Gujranwālā, and that it was from him that the writer obtained it. There is a copy of Macauliffe's edition in the BM (14162. c.14). The Ms is no longer traceable.

²Ibid ., p.9.

These were the two manuscripts which Vir Singh used for practically the whole of his Purātan Janam-sākhi. The basis was the Colebrooke Janam-sākhi, but any material which was in the Hafizābād version and not in the Colebrooke manuscript was added with appropriate notes to identify it. Variant readings were set out in footnotes, except where the editor considered them too insignificant to warrant mention.¹ For the most part the two versions are very close, with only occasional words or phrases differing. In places, however, the difference is more marked. The three most important examples occur in the conclusion to Jugavalī dī sākhi² where in the closing sentences the two diverge and where only the Colebrooke version gives the apocryphal Jugavalī; in Saidpur dī sākhi³ where the Hafizābād Janam-sākhi has a lengthy additional passage describing the Emperor Bābur as a clandestine galandar;⁴ and at the conclusion of the first udāsī⁵

¹One important difference which he omitted to mention is that the Hafizābād Ms does not have the text of Āsā Patti Likhi in the second sākhi. (See Macauliffe's edition, p.3.)

²Pur JS, sākhi 29, p.46.

³Ibid., pp. 58-65.

⁴Ibid., p.65 n.⁴. Macauliffe edition, pp. 163-7.

⁵Tour or lengthy journey. When spelt with a capital initial (Udāsī) it designates an order of ascetics founded by Bābā Sṛī Chand, one of Gurū Nānak's two sons.

where the Hafizabād version has two complete sakhīs which are not in the Colebrooke Janam-sakhī.¹

As with all janam-sakhīs both versions include substantial quantities of bānī attributed to Gurū Nānak. Most of it is to be found in the Ādi Granth under his title,² but some of it appears there under the title of other Gurūs or of Kabīr, and some of it is not to be found in the Ādi Granth at all. The works which have been correctly attributed to him frequently differ from the Ādi Granth versions in detail, but in Vīr Singh's edition they have been altered to conform to the Ādi Granth text, "for the correct text of gurabānī is that of the Gurū Granth Sāhib and it is not proper to print any corrupt text".³ Apart from a number of dohās he has omitted the apocryphal works, but has given five examples as appendices.⁴

Of the two the Hafizabād version appears to be closer to the common source. Certainly it is a better copy. Vīr Singh gives four examples of variant readings, in all of which the Hafizabād version is clearly correct and the Colebrooke version in error.⁵

¹Pur JS, sakhī 40, pp. 73-4, Macauliffe edition, pp. 184-6; sakhī 41, pp. 74-8, Macauliffe edition, pp. 187-97.

²Mahalā 1. See Appendix 1, p. 612.

³Pur JS, Introduction, p.h.

⁴Ibid., pp. 116-20.

⁵Ibid., Introduction, pp. e-s.

Another such example occurs in the Śivanābh dī sākhi¹ where in the Hāfizābād version the fourth couplet of the pad from Rāg Mārū is preceded by the words:

Tab phir rāje puchhiā, Jī tum Hindū jān Musalamān
ho? Tab Gurū Bābā chauthē paūrī bolīā:

These words are absent in the Colebrooke Janam-sākhi, but there can be no doubt that the context requires them.

It would not, however, be safe to assume that the Hāfizābād Janam-sākhi is the original of the Purātan group. The nature of the variations does not suggest that the Colebrooke version has been copied from the Hāfizābād Janam-sākhi, even at one or two removes, and in at least one place the Colebrooke reading is correct and that of Hāfizābād incorrect.² It appears more likely that both have a common source, and in view of their very considerable measure of identity it seems clear that neither can be far removed from it.

The original janam-sākhi has, however, never been found, although some writers have associated it with the name of a certain Sevā Dās.³ Macauliffe refers to this writer in his Introduction

¹Pur JS, sākhi 47, p. 87 n * .

²The Hāfizābād JS gives the rāg of the first pad in sākhi 33 as Jaitasari, whereas the Colebrooke version correctly gives it as Dhanāsari. Pur JS, p.56.

³E.g. Gaṇḍā Singh, Contemporary Sources of Sikh History, pp. 6-7; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.300.

to The Sikh Religion.

The last Janamsakhi which we shall notice was written by a Sikh called Sewa Das. Of this we have obtained several copies. One of them in our possession bears the date Sambat 1645 = A.D.1588. It was therefore completed at least sixteen years before the compilation of the Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan, which is admitted to have taken place in A.D.1604.¹

There is, however, no mention of a Sevā Dās in the janam-sākhi which Macauliffe published and it is clear from a footnote which he attaches at the end of the first sentence of the above quotation that the information was not based on anything he had himself seen:

The late Sir Atar Singh, Chief of Bhadaur, gave the author this information.²

Kanh Singh, who worked very closely with Macauliffe, also makes a brief, cryptic reference to Sevā Dās.

Sevā Dās: a person who lived in Poṭhohār³ and who wrote a janam-sākhi of Gurū Nānak in A.D.1588.⁴

This is all that he tells us. There is no indication at all of the grounds for the statement. No such janam-sākhi is known to exist⁵ and the fact that one of the manuscripts seen by Macauliffe bore the date S.1645 is no proof that the manuscript was actually

¹Loc.cit., i.lxxxvi.

²Ibid., i.lxxxvi, n.l.

³The area around Rawalpindi.

⁴MK, p.172.

⁵Gandā Singh, op.cit., p.7.

written then. The date of composition claimed by the Bhai Bala janam-sakhis indicates the impossibility of trusting such claims without careful scrutiny. In this case such an examination can no longer be made and the possibility of the Puratan manuscripts being traced back to an original written in S.1645 by a writer named Seva Das must obviously be regarded as exceedingly remote.¹

Neither the Colebrooke nor the Hafizabad Janam-sakhi bears an explicit date, but one reference in the Colebrooke manuscript clearly points to AD 1635. The fact that the two versions diverge in their conclusions to the Jugavali di sakhi has been

¹Sardar G. B. Singh has attributed the first collection of sakhis to a certain Shimbhoo Nath Brahman.

"Various episodes connected with Guru Nanak's life (not necessarily historical facts) were written by different people at different times, but none earlier than the last half of Akbar's reign The first collection of these episodes was made in 1701 AD by Shimbhoo Nath Brahman and it contains only 30 episodes in their simplest form."

- from a handwritten note by G. B. Singh attached to the Colebrooke Ms in the IO Library (Ms Panj. B6).

This is evidently the Ms referred to by Dr. Mohan Singh in a note describing manuscript copies of janam-sakhis which he had personally acquired:

"Of the remaining four (MSS), one dated 1701 was caligraphed by a Brahmin and is in the Punjab University Library, Lahore. This is a collection of 'Adi Sakhis'."

- The Spokesman, 9.12.57, quoted by G. S. Chhabra, The Advanced Study in History of the Punjab, p.49. It is Ms no. 4141 in the Punjab University Library (Volker Moeller, art. Die Lebensdaten des Glaubensstifters Nanak in the Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. vii, no. 4, p.287).

noted above. The Colebrooke Janam-sākhi gives the text of the Jugavali and then in the conclusion which follows includes the words:

Kalijug chār hazār sat sai paintīs baras
varatīa hai 4735.¹

Four thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five
years of Kaliyug have passed. 4735.

Working on the assumption that this refers to the date of the janam-sākhi's original compilation, and following the method of Karam Singh, Vīr Singh calculates the year as follows:

The year in which Vīr Singh was writing was
AD 1926 which equals S.1983.

In S.1983 5026 years of Kaliyug had passed.

Subtract 4735 from 5026 and the result is 291
which must represent the number of years which
had elapsed between the compilation of the
janam-sākhi and the year S. 1983 (AD 1926).

Subtract 291 from 1983 and the result is S. 1692
or AD 1635.

This places the janam-sākhi in the period of Gurū Hargobind who
was Gurū from AD 1606 to 1645.²

The claim which this represents is that the original janam-sākhi, not the Colebrooke copy, was written in AD 1635. The fact

¹Pur JS, p.116.

²Ibid., pp. 116-7.

that this reference is missing from the Hāfizābād Janam-sākhī substantially weakens the claim, but there are other factors which do at least suggest the same period. One such is the inclusion of works by Gurū Arjan which are erroneously attributed to Gurū Nānak. This indicates a date later than the time of Gurū Arjan for the Ādi Granth was compiled near the end of his life. Another is the evident fact that the author had not seen Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1. It is inconceivable that had he done so he would have omitted reference to the Baghdad incident which Bhāī Gurdās described. This does not prove that the janam-sākhī predated the Vār, but it does point to a period which preceded the general dissemination of Bhāī Gurdās's works. Thirdly, there is the obvious age of the language and the script, both of which resemble those of the Kartārpur version of the Ādi Granth.¹ None of these factors could be regarded as determinative, but the second and third are of some significance, particularly the third.

The Colebrooke manuscript itself is dated by Vīr Singh after AD 1699. This he does on the basis of a salutation which comes at the very end of the manuscript:

Bolahu Vāhigurū jī kī fatai hoī.²

¹E. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, p.ii (see supra p. 82); Pur JS, Introduction, pp. a, e.

²Pur JS, p.115.

The word Vāhigurū had already emerged by the time of Gurū Arjan as it appears for the first time in the savayyas of the bhatts who were contemporaries of his.¹ The salutation Vāhigurū jī kī fateh hoi is, however, unknown before the time of the tenth Gurū and its first known usage was at the institution of the Khālsā in 1699.² In the Colebrooke manuscript it appears in the same hand as the remainder of the janam-sākhī, but this does not affect the likelihood that it was added to the original version, either by the writer of the Colebrooke manuscript or by another writer whom he was following. It would be an entirely natural conclusion for him to add at the very end. The obvious age of its script means, however, that the Colebrooke cannot be much later than 1699 and accordingly it seems likely that it must have been written in the early eighteenth century. This would mean that the original would have been written during the seventeenth century and it may well have been composed as early as the time of Gurū Hargobind.

Little can be said concerning the Hāfizābād manuscript. Gurmukh Singh estimated that it had been written before the time

¹See Appendix 1, p. 608.

²Pur JS, Introduction, pp. ā-e.

of Gurū Gobind Singh (1666-1708), but gave no reasons for his opinion.¹ The fact that it is so close to the Colebrooke version, and at the same time more reliable where variants occur, points to the latter years of the seventeenth century, but the conclusion can be no more than a tentative one.

These two manuscripts, the Colebrooke and the Hāfizābād janam-sākhīs, are the most important of the Purātan group, but several others have been discovered. Macauliffe mentions "several copies"² and Karam Singh reported having seen the following:

1. A copy dated S.1790 (AD 1733) in a Lahore bookshop.
2. A copy in Gurdwārā Darbār Asthān, Lahore.
3. A copy dated S. 1787 (AD 1730) in Ferozepore, which stated that it was a copy of the janam-sākhī which had been written in Burhānpur in S.1727 (AD 1670).
4. A copy in Hyderābād (Sindh) said to have been written in Shikārpur.
5. A copy seen in Bandaian dā Dera, Bahāwalpur District.

In addition to these he mentions a copy which he himself had not seen, but which was reported to have been seen in Baradwān and to bear the date S.1814 (AD 1757).³

¹ Introduction to Macauliffe's edition of the Hāfizābād JS, p.5.

² Macauliffe, i.1xxxvi. See supra p. 88.

³ Karam Singh, Kattak ki Visakh, p.118.

India Office Library Manuscript, Pañjabī B40.

In addition to the Colebrooke Janam-sākhi the India Office Library possesses another manuscript which is obviously related to the Purātan tradition, an illustrated one dated S.1790 (AD 1733).¹ This may well be the first of the copies mentioned by Karam Singh. The dates correspond and the copy seen by Karam Singh was also illustrated. It may also be the same janam-sākhi as that referred to by Gurmukh Singh as the Lahore Vālī Janam-sākhi.² Of this manuscript Gurmukh Singh tells us nothing except that it is dated S.1790 and that it is not in the Bhāī Bālā tradition. The manuscript B40 was acquired by the India Office Library in 1907.

This manuscript is related to the Purātan tradition, but it is far from being identical with the Colebrooke or Hāfizābād versions. Apart from the early sākhis it is largely independent of them. It follows the Hāfizābād Janam-sākhi in the early sākhis,³ but after the sākhi which describes Gurū Nanak's departure from

¹ 'Sammāt 1790 mitī bhādhō sūdī 3 vār sukaru.' (Folio 230a). The copyist's name is given as Daiarām (folio 230b) and a rough note on folio 84b claims that it was dictated by a certain Bhāī Saṅgū.

² Gurmukh Singh, Introduction to Macauliffe's edition of the Hāfizābād JS, p.3.

³ Like the Hāfizābād Ms, but unlike the Colebrooke version, it omits the text of Āsa Paṭṭī Likhī in the second sākhi. See supra 85, n.1. There are numerous minor variants.

Sultānpur it diverges and only a limited amount of the remaining material corresponds even remotely to the two main Purātan manuscripts.¹ Some of the sākhīs indicate a connection with the Bhāī Bālā tradition,² but only a very indirect one, the versions recorded in this manuscript having been withdrawn from the oral stock appreciably earlier than the corresponding Bhāī Bālā sākhīs. Bhāī Bālā, the person, is nowhere mentioned. Several of the sākhīs are simply discourses rather than incidents and bear such vague titles as Sākhī iku rāje nālī hoi³ and Bābā jī ik mulaku gaiā.⁴ Unlike the principal Purātan manuscripts it includes the famous story of Gurū Nānak watering his Lahore fields from Hardwār,⁵ and

¹There is an appreciable degree of correspondence in the following sākhīs: Kaliyug, folios 44 ff; Saidpur, folios 66 ff; the wealthy man's flags, folios 189 ff; the first half of the sākhī concerning Rājā Śivanābh, corresponding to the Pur JS sākhī 41, folios 138 ff. For the second half see infra pp. 373, 375-6.

²E.g. Goṣṭ AbdūlRahamān nālī, folios 37 ff (BB JS, p.547); Bholā Chor, folios 41 ff (BB JS p.452); Goṣṭ Mūle Khatrī nālī, folios 100 ff (BB JS, p.468); Goṣṭ Bābe Nānaku Ajite Randhavai nālī, folios 111 ff. (BB JS, p.468). Mula and Jitta Randhava are both mentioned by Bhāī Gurdas in his Var 11. See infra pp. 190-1.

³IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folios 128 ff.

⁴Ibid., folios 158 ff.

⁵Ibid., folios 76 ff. See infra pp. 238-9.

it also refers to a Baghdad visit.¹ The collection follows no logical order after the departure from Sultānpur, simply recording sākhīs as isolated incidents. Consecutive sākhīs are sometimes linked, but there is no consistent sequence.

A brief note in the India Office Library catalogue² indicates that Sardār G. B. Singh, who examined the Library's Pañjābī manuscripts in 1949, regarded the variant readings of this manuscript as simpler and more archaic than the text of the Colebrooke Janam-sākhī, and on these grounds concluded that it represents an even earlier version of the Purātan tradition than the Colebrooke manuscript. There appears to be no doubt that it does represent a more primitive collection than either the Colebrooke or Hāfizābād janam-sākhīs. Although there is little to distinguish the three as far as language is concerned the sākhīs of this version are, for the most part, more rudimentary than those of the Colebrooke and Hāfizābād manuscripts. Several of them consist of little more than a pad, with a very brief introduction added to give it a setting. Whether it may be regarded as a version of the Purātan tradition is, however, open to some

¹IO Library Ms Panj.B.40, folio 200. The sākhī does not, however, correspond to Bhaī Gurdas's account of the Guru's Baghdad visit. (Var 1:35-36. See infra p. 183). According to this Ms the discourse in Baghdad is said to have been with Sheikh Sharaf.

²Pañjābī MSS Catalogue, MSS.Eur.D.498.

doubt. If it is to be assigned to any of the recognisable traditions then it must certainly be included within the Purātan group, but it would be more accurate to speak of an affiliation with the Purātan tradition rather than of inclusion within it.

The Miharbān Janam-sākhī

Of the three traditions the most neglected has been that of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. Until relatively recent years this was inevitably the case as no copy of any substantial portion of the janam-sākhī was known to exist. The absence of any such manuscript was not, however, regarded as a serious misfortune for the janam-sākhī had long since acquired a disagreeable reputation. Macauliffe reflected this hostile opinion in the brief paragraph which he devoted to the Miharbān Janam-sākhī in his Introduction to The Sikh Religion. The paragraph concludes:

Miharban, the son of Prithi Chand, wrote a Janamsakhi of Guru Nanak in which he glorified his own father. Here there was ample opportunity for the manipulation of details. It is in this Janamsakhi¹ of the Minas we first find mention of Bhai Bala.

In the circumstances this judgment was understandable, but it was both inaccurate and unjust. Prithī Chand's name does not

¹ Macauliffe, i. lxxx. Gurmukh Singh, in his Introduction to Macauliffe's edition of the Hāfizābād JS, lists all the JSs known at the time (1885). There is no reference to the Miharbān JS.

appear in Miharbān's account of the Gurū's life, there is very little evidence in it of what could be called "manipulation of details", and there is no reference to Bhāī Bālā. Kānh Singh subsequently expressed a similar condemnation¹ and there can be no doubt that these two influential writers have been responsible for perpetuating, and indeed strengthening, a mistaken hostility towards the janam-sākhī. It does not denigrate Gurū Nānak and it is no more misleading factually than other janam-sākhīs, but it is still regarded with considerable suspicion and has been largely ignored.

The basic reason for this traditional hostility is the fact that Soḍhī Miharbān, the author of the janam-sākhī, was closely associated with the heretical sect of Miṇās. Miharbān, whose real name was Manohar Dās, was the only son of Prithī Chand (AD 1558-1619),² the eldest son of Gurū Rām Dās. According to the manuscript

¹"Miharbān: Bābā Prithīchand's son, who became the leader of the Divānā sect. Like his father he too opposed the Gurū Sāhib and wrote a janam-sākhī of Gurū Nānak in which there are many things, contrary to the Gurū's teachings." - MK, p.726. The Divānās were a sect of Udāsī sādhus. See MK, p.476.

²Kirpāl Singh, *Mih JS Introduction*, p.vi, evidently following *Goṣṭan Miharvān jī dīān* (see *infra* p99n). MK, p.603, gives his dates as S.1615-75 (AD 1558-1618). Gurū Arjan, the youngest of Gurū Rām dās's three sons, was accordingly Miharbān's uncle. See Appendix 5, p. 647.

Goṣṭān Miharvān jī dīān¹ he was born on Māgh sudī 5, S.1638, which corresponds to January 24th, 1582 A.D. The same manuscript records that when Miharbān was six or seven months old Gurū Rām Dās died on Bhādr̥on sudī 3, S.1638, and subsequently repeats this statement. If, however, Miharbān was born in Māgh sudī 5, S.1638, he must have been born after the death of Gurū Rām Dās, whereas if it be accepted that he was born seven months before the Gurū's death then Māgh sudī 5, S.1637, would be an appropriate date, being seven months and twenty days before the date of the Gurū's death. It seems clear that the author of Goṣṭān Miharvān jī dīān must have intended the year to be S.1637 and that accordingly AD 1581 may be accepted as the probable year of Miharbān's birth.² At his father's death

¹"The Discourses of Miharbān", an old Ms, evidently written during the seventeenth century AD, Ms no. 3510 (188) in the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar. The author is said to have been Harijī, the second son and successor of Miharbān. (Kirpāl Singh, *Mih JS Introduction*, p.vii n.1, and *Introductory Essays*, p.36 n.1) Professor Kirpāl Singh also refers to an incomplete Ms entitled Goṣṭ Bābā Nānak jī kī, Sikh History Research Department no.2306, the greater portion of which consists of discourses said to have been uttered by Gurū Nānak during his Kartārpur days. (*Op.cit.*, p.38.) Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh has informed the writer that this Ms, which contains examples of Mīṇā polemic against the orthodox Sikhs, was presented to the Department by Bāwā Udham Singh of Lahore in 1932, and that according to the donor it had been in the possession of his family for at least one hundred years. An almost identical copy of this Ms which was in the possession of the late Sant Jwālā Singh of Paṭiālā was destroyed during the rainy season of 1949. See also Gaṇḍā Singh, Contemporary Sources of Sikh History, p.7.

²Kirpāl Singh, op.cit., *Introductory essays*, pp.1-2.

he became gurū of the Mīṇās and he himself died in AD 1640.¹

Prior to Miharbān's birth his father, Prithī Chand, had been responsible for the management of Gurū Rām Dās's kitchen and household affairs. His behaviour was evidently unsatisfactory for, in spite of being the Gurū's eldest son, he was passed over in favour of his younger brother, Arjan, when his father chose a successor. After Gurū Rām Dās's death Prithī Chand is said to have taken possession of all the household goods and made efforts to assert his claim to the succession. The efforts failed, but he persisted in his opposition and following Gurū Arjan's execution in AD 1606 made further attempts to secure the succession.²

At some point Prithī Chand was called a Mīṇā and the name stuck, both to him and to the group of followers he had gathered. The Mīṇās were a tribe of Gurgāon and the adjacent districts of Rājasthān who specialised in highway robbery and who are described by Ibbetson as "the boldest of our criminal classes".³ The word passed into the common parlance of the Pañjāb where it was used to describe a dissembling rogue, one who took care to conceal his evil intentions.⁴ Some Sikh scholars are of the opinion that the

¹Kirpāl Singh, op.cit., Introductory Essays, p.5.

²Gaṇḍā Singh, Nānak Panthīs, p.15 n.28.

³Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Panjab Castes, p.282.

⁴Hazārā Singh and Vīr Singh, Varan Bhai Gurdas, p.577.

epithet was first applied to Prithī Chand by Gurū Rām Dās,¹ but the first known example of its usage in this context appears to be in the Vārs of Bhāī Gurdās.

Miṇā hoā Pirathīā kari kari ṭeḍhak baralu chalāiā.²

Prithīā became a Miṇā, acting perversely and venting his madness.

This is a brief reference in a list of famous antagonists.

Vār 36 applies the term to the group as well as to the leader and denounces them at some length. According to Santokh Singh³ the Vār was composed while Bhāī Gurdās was returning from an unpleasant interview with Prithī Chand in the village of Herā. He had, so Santokh Singh claims, been sent there by Gurū Arjan in order to give assurances of affection, but had received in return some strongly worded insults.⁴

Santokh Singh's Sūraj Prakāś is both late⁵ and in many respects unreliable, and such accounts which find no support elsewhere warrant a measure of scepticism. There can, however, be no

¹Hazārā Singh and Vīr Singh, op.cit., p.577. Gaṇḍā Singh, Nānak Panthīs, p.15 n.29.

²Vār 26:33.

³Sūraj Prakāś, rāsi 3 ansū 24-25. In Vīr Singh's edition vol.vi, pp. 2002-11.

⁴Hazārā Singh and Vīr Singh, op.cit., p.577.

⁵It was completed in S.1901 (AD 1844). MK, p.183

doubt concerning the warmth of Bhaī Gurdās's feelings. Obviously there must have been a real division between the Mīnās and the orthodox Sikhs, a conclusion which is confirmed by the Dabistan.

In short, after Arjan Mal, his brother Prithia, whom the latter's followers call Guru Meharban (sic), occupied the spiritual office. Now that is one thousand and fifty-five al-Hijri (AD 1645), Guru Harji is his successor. Prithia and his successors hold themselves to be Bhagats, that is, the worshippers of God. And the disciples of Guru Hargobind, son of Arjan Mal name them (Prithia and his successors and followers) Mina (the detestable) and this name among them is contemptuous.¹

It is obvious that the orthodox were deeply hostile towards the Mīnās, but the precise nature of the conflict at this early stage is less clear. Was there an explicit doctrinal disagreement or was the division an essentially personal one which had developed out of Prithī Chand's bitterness at having been passed over in favour of a younger brother? Bhaī Gurdās described the Mīnās as liars, hypocrites and thieves, destined for consignment to Jampur,² but there is nothing in his vigorous denunciations which enables us to identify a specifically doctrinal issue, apart from the refusal to recognise the authority of the legitimate Gurū. It is easy to imagine that the conflict subsequently threw up such differences, but the likelihood appears to be that the quarrel was

¹Gaṇḍā Singh, Nānak Panthīs, p.15. The sect is now extinct.

²Var 36:2-4.

basically a personal one and that accordingly the Mīnās were schismatics, not heretics.

The refusal to acknowledge the legitimate succession would certainly have been regarded as an extremely serious one by the orthodox Sikhs, but the issue was not one which necessarily involved differing interpretations of Gurū Nānak's works. At no point does Bhāī Gurdās accuse the Mīnās of manipulating either the Gurū's bāṇī or the traditions concerning Gurū Nānak's life. Some of the remarks he makes about their perverseness might perhaps be interpreted in this way, but such interpretations would be forced. It is much more likely that Bhāī Gurdās is referring simply to Prithī Chand's positive refusal to accept the legitimacy of Gurū Arjan's accession.

This is not to deny that the Mīnās subsequently tampered with both scripture and tradition. It does, however, suggest that their early history may have been misinterpreted and it certainly indicates that the question of Miharbān's allegiance to the teachings of Gurū Nānak and the traditions concerning his life should not be prejudged on the basis of his connection with the sect. His allegiance to Gurū Nānak's teachings and his value as a mediator of tradition must be judged on the basis of his own janam-sākhi.

The principal agent in the development of the belief con-

cerning the general unreliability of Miharbān's testimony was probably the compiler of the Gyan-ratanāvalī. In the introduction to this work it is explicitly stated that the Chhoṭe Mel Vāle¹ had introduced errors into the record of Gurū Nānak's life and discourses, and that as a result the faith of the orthodox was declining.² The compiler of this janam-sākhī is, however, an untrustworthy source of information concerning the early seventeenth century. Further on in his introductory passage he declares:

At the time when the fifth Master established the canon of Srī Granth Sahib the Sikhs besought him (saying), 'There is no authenticated version of the discourses. The Pañj Mel Vāle have all interpolated objectionable things in the janam-sākhī and are leading the Sikhs astray'. Bhāi Gurdās was instructed to write a janam-sākhī in the form of a var so that by means of the var the Gurū's Sikhs might read the record (of the Gurū's life).³

This is clearly an anachronism. It is true that the Mīnās were one of the five execrated groups which came to be collectively referred to as the Pañj Mel,⁴ but of the other four

¹Literally "the lower congregation", a term which could be applied to any heretics or dissenters, but which came to be attached specifically to the Mīnās. MK, p.603.

²See infra p.156 for a translation of the Introduction.

³GR, 1891 edition, p.3.

⁴MK, pp. 593-4.

only one, the Masands, had been established by the time of Gurū Arjan, the fifth Master. Moreover, it was not until after his time that the Masands fell into evil ways.¹ The remaining three, the Dhīrmallīās, the Rāmraīās, and the Sirgums, all developed later. The Dhīrmallīās were the followers of Dhīr Mal, the grandson of Gurū Hargobind. He was born in AD 1626² and accordingly his followers could not have been active in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Similarly, Rām Rāi, Gurū Hari Rāi's son and Dhīr Mal's nephew, was born in AD 1646.³ The Sirgums were those who cut their hair, a practice which could not have been treated as an offence until after the founding of the Khālṣā in AD 1699.⁴ The term Pañj Mel obviously became current after this latter date.

Accordingly, it appears that the compiler of the Gyān-ratanāvalī did not really possess accurate information concerning the motives which prompted Bhāi Gurdās's Var 1. A possibility which should not be over-looked is that the reference to the Pañj

¹They were first appointed by Gurū Rām Dās to collect tithes and offerings. During the seventeenth century they became corrupt and the order was abolished by Gurū Gobind Singh in AD 1698. MK, p.698.

²MK, p.500. See Appendix 5, p. 647.

³MK, p.775. See Appendix 5, p. 647.

⁴MK, p.149.

Mel Vāle is a misprint in the 1891 edition of the Gyan-ratanāvalī¹ or an error in a manuscript which was used for its preparation,² and that the correct reading should be Chhoṭe Mel Vāle. Even so, the janam-sākhī is, as we shall see, a relatively late product and without corroboration cannot be regarded as a safe authority on an incident which is alleged to have taken place in the time of Gurū Arjan.

Whatever the reasons may have been, the hostility was certainly there and in the absence of a copy of the Miharban Janam-sākhī there was no evident reason for modifying it. In these circumstances the judgments expressed by Macauliffe and Kanh Singh were perhaps inevitable. It was not until relatively recently that a manuscript covering more than half of the whole janam-sākhī was eventually discovered.³ This manuscript comprises three pothīs, or volumes, the first of which was edited by Professor Kirpal Singh of Khālsā College, Amritsar, and published in 1962. The remaining two are due to be published in 1965. The first of the

¹See infra p. 155, n.1.

²This is, however, unlikely. A note by the printer inserted in the margin of p.41 of the GR indicates that several MSS were used for the preparation of the introductory section. (See infra p.154, n.1.)

³Ms No. SHR:427A of the Sikh History Research Department, Khālsā College, Amritsar.

pothis is obviously much the most important part of the whole janam-sākhī. The second and third pothis contain little other than discourse and interpretation of scripture, and it is evident that the same must apply to practically all that was contained in the remaining three pothis which have never been found. Practically all that is of any biographical importance will almost certainly have been included in the first pothī. The five which follow it are unlikely to add more than an occasional detail.

The manuscript was evidently brought to the notice of Bhaī Jodh Singh, Principal of Khālsā College, Amritsar, by Giānī Bishan Singh, the granthī of the College gurdwārā. According to the information supplied by Bishan Singh it was in the possession of his maternal uncle, Giānī Bhagat Singh, Mahant of Madrasā Baṅgā at Damdamā Sāhib, Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī.¹ Principal Jodh Singh despatched the Giānī and Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh to Damdamā Sāhib and in this manner the manuscript was acquired by Khālsā College.²

The manuscript turned out to be three sections bound in a single volume:

¹See Appendix 1, p. 623.

²Kirpāl Singh, Mh JS Introduction, p.v. Kirpāl Singh does not give the actual year in which the Ms was acquired, but Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh has informed the writer that it was at the very beginning of 1941. He and Giānī Bishan Singh were at Damdamā Sāhib from the 27th to the 29th of December, 1940, and the Giānī returned a few days later to collect the Ms.

1. Pothī Sach-khand (folios 1-301).
2. Pothī Harijī (folios 302-504).
3. Pothī Chatarabhuj (folios 524-676).

According to the colophon of Pothī Sach-khand these three were followed by three more entitled Keso Rāi Pothī, Abhai Pad Pothī, and Prem Pad Pothī respectively. The colophon may be translated as follows:

Sach-khand Pothī has been written. (1) The completion of Sach-khand Pothī took place on Sunday, Chet sudi 5, Samvat 1885. In this Pothī Sach-khand there are one hundred and fifty-three (153) goṣṭs. (There were) one hundred and sixty-seven goṣṭs (but) fourteen goṣṭs are missing. After this is Harijī's Pothī (61) (in which are) sixty-one goṣṭs. After it is Chatarabhuj Pothī (74), seventy-four goṣṭs. After this is Keso Rai Pothī. After it is Abhai Pad Pothī. After this is Prem Pad Pothī. There are six pothīs and together they total five hundred and seventy-five (575) goṣṭs. The six pothīs cover the life of Bābā Nanak. Vāhu Gurūjī. (1)¹

Of the six sections the only one attributed to Miharbān himself is the first. This first pothī opens with an invocation and then proceeds:

The writing of Sach-khand Pothī has begun. Miharvān jī, the servant of Srī Satgurū Bābā Nanak jī, had this pothī written. '(He who) hears this pothī, reads it and sings it will obtain salvation.' Srī Satgurū Miharvan jī has

¹Mih JS, p.519.

declared, 'If anyone reads Pothī Sach-khand he will be saved. (He who) reads it with adoration will assuredly draw near to Bābā (Nānak) jī.¹

This introduction is obviously not by Miharbān himself, but there appears to be no reason for rejecting the claim it makes concerning the origin of Pothī Sach-khand. The other two sections of the manuscript are, as their titles indicate, attributed to Harijī, Miharbān's second son and successor as gurū of the Mīnās, and to Chatarabhuj, his third son. All three were written by an amanuensis. In Pothī Harijī and Pothī Chatarabhuj he is explicitly named as Paṇḍit Keso Dās and the manuscript records that he completed the former in S.1707 (AD 1650) and the latter in S.1708 (AD 1651). There is no such reference at the end of Pothī Sach-khand, but according to Gosṭān Miharavān jī dīān Keso Dās was responsible for that section also. Gosṭān Miharavān jī dīān also offers a description of the manner in which the collection was originally made. According to this description Miharbān's regular practice was to select a passage from gurbānī and interpret it before the saṅgat. Keso Dās is said to have copied down these utterances and so eventually to have recorded a substantial number of gosṭs.²

¹Mih JS, p.1.

²Kirpāl Singh, op.cit., Introduction, pp. v-vii and ix, and Introductory Essays, pp. 36-8.

The janam-sākhī itself clearly shows that Miharbān's primary purpose was the exposition and interpretation of bānī, and that biographical details were included more as settings for discourses than for their own sake. His account of Gurū Nānak's visit to Banāras illustrates this. The account covers more than twenty pages in Kirpāl Singh's edition,¹ but the only biographical details it offers are that Gurū Nānak conversed with paṇḍits² and gobind lok,³ and that he greatly impressed the people.⁴ One of the discourses with the paṇḍits is said to have taken place at the Bisrāntī Ghāṭ.⁵ On this occasion all the paṇḍits of Banāras are said to be present and are told by an unidentified informant that Nānak is a Bedī khatri, dressed as an ascetic, and that he eats nothing.⁶

These details are dealt with in less than three per cent of the space devoted to the account of the Banāras visit, the remainder consisting of discourse (approximately twenty per cent), quotations from Gurū Nānak's works (approximately twenty per cent),

¹Mih JS, pp. 130-50.

²Ibid., pp. 130, 132, 139, 144, 146.

³Ibid., p.135. The term gobind lok or gobind log is synonymous with bhagats or sadhūs. Cf Guru Arjan's Gaurī 144 (3), AG p.211.

⁴Ibid., pp. 137, 144.

⁵The Viśrāntī Ghāṭ associated with Kṛṣṇa's defeat of Kāṃsa. Kirpāl Singh, Mih JS, p.144 n.6.

⁶Mih JS, p.144.

interpretations of such quotations (approximately fifty per cent), and Miharbān's own concluding śloks (approximately seven per cent).

In other cases no biographical details are offered at all. Gost 53, which describes a discourse with God, covers seventeen pages with discourse, quotation, and interpretation in the ratio of approximately 3 : 5 : 16.¹ The only other components are a brief description of Gurū Nānak's consumption of amrit received from God and Miharbān's customary concluding ślok. The earlier gosts tend to have more biographical material. Gost 24, four pages in length, is all biographical except for the concluding ślok.² This is, however, an exception to the general pattern and there are few others.

This means that only a small proportion of the janam-sākhī is directly relevant to our biographical concern. There is, however, nothing surprising in this, for all of the janam-sākhīs use most biographical incidents as settings for utterances by Gurū Nānak. In this respect Miharbān's janam-sākhī differs only in that

¹Mih JS, pp. 157-73.

²Ibid., pp. 72-7. The following two gosts, pp. 77-82, are almost entirely bāṇī and interpretation.

it offers much more extensive interpretations of the scripture which it quotes. Like the other old janam-sākhīs it frequently misquotes and like all the janam-sākhīs it ascribes to Gurū Nānak works which are by other Gurūs.¹ It is to be noted, however, that there is one extenuating factor in Miharbān's case which does not apply to the other janam-sākhīs. All but one of the extracts which he erroneously ascribes to Gurū Nānak appear in the Ādi Granth as parts of vars. The vars are composite works, including the banī of different Gurūs, and although the components are all identified a mistake made with var material is more excusable than one involving a pad which plainly bears its author's title. The one exception, Gurū Amar Dās's ślok 104, is also explicable. It occurs in the collection of Sheikh Farīd's śloks and the same collection also includes śloks by Gurū Nānak.² Miharbān

¹The following are wrongly ascribed to Gurū Nānak:
 Gurū Angad: Var Malār, ślok 1 of paurī 3, (AG, p.1279), Mih JS p.46;
Var Sarāṅg, ślok 1 of paurī 16, (AG, p.1243), Mih JS p.145; Var Mājh,
ślok 2 of paurī 3, (AG, p.139), Mih JS p.280; Var Sorāṭhi, ślok 2
 of paurī 28, (AG, p.653), Mih JS p.511.
 Gurū Rām Dās: Var Rāmakalī, śloks 1 and 2 of paurī 6 (AG, p.949),
 Mih JS p.179; ślok 104 (AG, p.1383), Mih JS p.490.

²Ślok 113, AG p.1384, which is also included in the Var of Sirī Rāgu, AG p.83; and ślok 124, AG p. 1384, which is also included in the same Var, AG p.91.

is not thereby exonerated, but it does appear that his work is marked by greater care than that of the other janam-sākhī compilers.

In other respects also the manuscript plainly indicates that as far as his janam-sākhī is concerned Miharbān has been misjudged. The janam-sākhī does indeed contain errors which could cause offence, but not sufficient to warrant the measure of disapproval it actually received. One of the principal charges which had been levelled against Miharbān was that he had attached Gurū Nānak's name to his own compositions. His janam-sākhī suggests that this traditional belief is probably mistaken. Every gost concludes with one or more śloks. These are not by Gurū Nānak, but they do not purport to be so. All but thirteen of them are signed either "Dās Nānak", "Nānak Dās", or (in two cases only) "Jan Nānak".¹ "Dās Nānak" or "Nānak Dās" is obviously the conventional pseudonym which Miharbān used and it would not have been confused with Gurū Nānak's own signature. Nor could the thirteen exceptions be misunderstood for it soon becomes clear that there is a regular pattern in the janam-sākhī and that a concluding

¹The thirteen exceptions are the śloks which conclude gosts 14, 35, 46, 74, 87, 92, 94, 105, 123, 124, 128, 133 and 148.

ślok by the author is a part of it. The worst that can be said against Miharbān in this respect is that one of the thirteen has been taken from Gurū Arjan's Bhairau Aṣṭapadī 3.¹

Perhaps the most serious of the offensive errors which the janam-sākhī does in fact contain is the reason it gives for the first udāsī. According to Miharbān the purpose of the tīrath-yātrā which constituted the first udāsī was to find a gurū.

Gurū Bābā performed the discipline of repeating God's Nām for several days. The word of Nirāñjan Nirāñkar then came (to him): 'Nānak, your discipline is accomplished. You have become a perfected bhagat. But now go and take a gurū for he who performs bhakti and disciplines without a gurū is not accepted.' When this command came from God Gurū Bābā proceeded on a tīrath-yātrā (saying), 'The gatherings of sādhūs and bhagats take place at the tīraths and perhaps I shall meet a perfected sādhū bhagat. He who works my salvation I shall take as my gurū.' Gurū Bābā Nānak then proceeded from that place and roamed the tīraths.²

An account of this kind might well cause resentment, but it is not really as offensive as a remark which the Purātan janam-sākhīs make about Gurū Nānak smiling at the prospect of an infant's imminent death.³ Miharbān attributes the massacre of Saidpur to the Gurū's wrath,⁴ but so too do the Purātan janam-sākhīs.⁵

¹AG, p. 1157. The ślok is the one which concludes gost 74.

²Mih JS, gost 36, p.111. Cf also gost 109, p.361.

³Pur JS, sākhī 19, p.29.

⁴Mih JS, gost 139, p.465.

⁵Pur JS, sākhī 35, pp . 58-9.

Miharbān might perhaps be adjudged guilty, but no more so than the Purātan version or any other janam-sākhi.¹

The colophons at the end of the three pothis all state that the copy obtained from Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī was made in S.1885 (AD 1828).² The copyists name is not given. The colophon of Pothi Harijī evidently implies that the copy was made from the original, but it is a claim which is unlikely to be correct. The text is not pure in that it contains references which would not have been possible in the early or mid seventeenth century,³ and there are also indications of subsequent alterations by Udāsī sādhus.⁴ The manuscript is incomplete at two points. Folios 82-84, covering a few lines of gost 51, all of gost 52, and some pages of the lengthy gost 53 are missing. So too are folios 121-5, covering gosts 68 and 69.⁵ In 1961, however, Khālsā College acquired a second manuscript, a large fragment of Pothi Sach-khand which contains seventy-two gosts and, with the exception of gost 1 which it lacks, corresponds to the first 129

¹According to Dr. Trilochan Singh the chief objection was and, for him at least, remains the fact that Miharbān "tried to downgrade the spiritual status of Guru Nanak by calling Guru Nanak an avatar of Janak and not an embodiment of the Perfect Spirit of God." The Sikh Review, Vol. xi, no.11, p.26. The Janak referred to by Miharbān (Mih JS, p.1) appears to be the first Rājā Janak, the progenitor of Sita's father. (See infra p.228.)

²See supra p. 108.

³Kirpāl Singh, Mih JS Introduction, p.ix.

⁴Ibid., Introductory Essays, p.83. Cf infra pp. 239, 315-6.

⁵Ibid., Introduction, p.x, and Introductory Essays, p.153 n.7.

folios of the Sābo ki Talvaṇḍī manuscript. Professor Kirpāl Singh used this second manuscript to supply the material lacking in the first.¹

The date of the original version is impossible to determine with certainty but it seems likely that it would have been finally compiled between AD 1640, the year of Miharbān's death, and 1650, the date ascribed to Pothī Harijī. The introduction to Pothī Sach-khand appears to have been written after his death and the production of Pothī Harijī and Pothī Chatarabhuji in successive years suggests that the whole collection may have been compiled in a single operation extending over a number of years.

This of course applies only to the compilation. If Gosṭān Miharavān jī dīān is to be believed, the actual composition must have extended over many years of Miharbān's lifetime and been recorded during that time as individual gosṭs. Gosṭān Miharavān jī dīān also claims that "all the gosṭs" were delivered before "the Gurū Sāhib".² This title must refer to Prithī Chand³ who died

¹Kirpāl Singh, Mih JS Introduction, p.x. The Ms is SHR: 2190 (A Catalogue of Punjabi and Urdu Manuscripts in the Sikh History Research Department until March 31, 1963, pp. 12-13).

²Kirpāl Singh, op.cit., p.vii.

³Ibid.

in AD 1619 and so the testimony of Gosṭān Miharavān jī dīān is that the goṣṭs were all delivered before this date. If this is correct Paṇḍit Keso Dās must have been a young man when he first started making his records. The statement concerning "all the goṣṭs" may be true, but it seems much more likely that the writer, who was certainly capable of error, is exaggerating and that the goṣṭs were in fact spread over a longer period extending beyond 1619.

Professor Kirpāl Singh, however, accepts this testimony and concludes that the Miharbān Janam-sākhi is the oldest of the extant janam-sākhis.

From this discussion (of the dating of Bhaī Gurdās's Var 1, the Puratan janam-sākhis, and the Miharbān Janam-sākhi) it is clear that the janam-sākhi composed by Miharbān is the oldest janam-sākhi and that the account in it is the oldest tradition concerning the life of Gurū Nanak.¹

Expressed in such categorical terms the claim which he makes on behalf of the Miharbān Janam-sākhi is untenable, for it means accepting three doubtful evidences as established truths. In the case of Bhaī Gurdās's Var 1 it involves acceptance of the belief, based upon the introductory portion of the Gyān-ratānā-valī, that the Var was composed because the Mīṇās were circulating

¹Kirpāl Singh, Introductory Essays, p.83.

misleading goṣṭs. As we have already seen, the compiler of the Gyān-ratanāvalī is very much open to question on this particular point.¹ The claim also involves acceptance of AD 1635 as the definite date of the original janam-sākhī of the Purātan tradition,² another doubtful point in that the relevant reference does not occur in the Hāfizābād version.³ And finally it means accepting as beyond doubt the statement of Goṣṭān Miharavān jī dīān that "all the goṣṭs" were delivered before "the Gurū Sāhib".⁴

This, however, concerns the relative ages of the Var and the two janam-sākhīs. It does not necessarily imply a judgment concerning their relative reliability and value as records of Gurū Nānak's life. In the forming of an opinion concerning their reliability and value age is not the only criterion, and in this particular comparison it cannot be the most important one. As far as age is concerned our conclusion must be that there is little to distinguish the three. All of them, it appears, had their beginnings in traditions which developed during the second half of

¹See supra pp. 104-5.

²Kirpāl Singh follows a calculation which makes the date AD 1634. Op. cit., p.83.

³See supra pp. 89-91.

⁴See supra pp. 116-7.

the sixteenth century, and all three evidently emerged in their present form, or something resembling it, during the first half of the seventeenth century. The age criterion identifies these three as the most important of our sources, but gives little help in distinguishing between them. For this purpose other criteria are required.

The Relative Value of Bhāi Gurdās's Vārs, the Purātan Janam-sakhī, and the Miharbān Janam-sakhī as Sources for a Biography of Gurū Nānak

Bhāi Gurdās's Vārs 1 and 11

The account of Gurū Nānak's life given in Bhāi Gurdās's Vār 1, and supplemented in Vār 11, is a very brief one, but within the limited range which it covers this account has generally been accepted as the most reliable available. There are three reasons for this reputation. The first and basic one is the indisputable fact that the author was a Sikh of impeccable orthodoxy who was closely associated with both Gurū Arjan and Gurū Hargobind. Secondly, there is the coherence of the travel itinerary which may be deduced from the first Vār. Thirdly, there is the belief that there is less of the miraculous in this account and accordingly less which warrants any degree of scepticism. Khushwant Singh's conclusion is that with regard to the events of Gurū Nānak's life,

"whatever reference he makes in the Vārs must be considered authentic".¹

The importance of the first reason should not be minimised, but we are nevertheless unable to accept the conclusion without some qualification. The belief that the account in Vār 1 contains less of the miraculous than the janam-sākhīs is an illusion created by its limited range. If the comparison is narrowed down to the three incidents which are common to the Vār and to either or both of the two older janam-sākhī traditions,² it is at once evident that Bhāī Gurdās's account contains almost as many miraculous or otherwise unacceptable details as the Purātan version and, in one instance, more than that of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. In the encounter with the eighty-four Siddhs on Mount Sumeru there is the anachronistic reference to Gorakhnāth and there is also the story of the jewels by the lakeside which the Miharbān account lacks.³ In Mecca we have the moving mosque⁴ and in Achal Baṭālā the yogīs turning into lions, wolves, birds, and snakes.⁵

¹Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.301.

²The Mount Sumeru, Mecca, and Achal Baṭālā incidents. See infra pp.284-5 , numbers 72, 79, and 90.

³See infra p. 181

⁴In Bhāī Gurdās's account it is "Mecca" which moves. See infra p.182.

⁵See infra p. 187.

These details must prompt a measure of caution and constrain us to qualify Khushwant Singh's conclusion. We may attach a greater degree of trust to Bhāī Gurdās's account than to those of the Purātan and Miharbān janam-sākhīs, but it cannot be an unqualified trust. We must, moreover conclude that even if the two Vars are the most reliable they are also the least satisfactory. The chief reason for this is the brevity of the account which they provide. The author's primary purpose was obviously to extol the Gurū rather than to provide a comprehensive record of his life and so the Vars must disappoint us if we seek in them anything more than a brief sketch of a small part of his travels and the names of a number of his followers. They retain a value in these respects, but it is to the janam-sākhīs that we must look for most of our material.

The Purātan and Miharbān Janam-sākhīs

One point which at once becomes clear in any comparison of the Purātan and Miharbān janam-sākhīs is that as far as their biographical content is concerned they share a common tradition and a common distinction from the janam-sākhīs of the Bhāī Bālā tradition. It is remotely possible that this is a result of one having copied from the other, but much more likely that they share a common source, or sources, of sākhīs. The similarities

between the two accounts establish the connection beyond all doubt and the differences indicate there is unlikely to have been any direct copying of one by the other. The similarities are as follows:

1. Both, in contrast to the Bhai Bala tradition, give the month of Guru Nanak's birth as Vaisakh, S.1526.¹
2. Neither mentions Bhai Bala, the key figure in the Bhai Bala tradition.
3. Neither refers to a Baghdad visit.
4. Although the Miharban and Bhai Bala janam-sakhis are so much longer than the Puratan janam-sakhis there are no goṣṭs in the Miharban Janam-sakhi which have parallel sakhis only in the Bhai Bala versions. All incidents common to the Miharban and Bhai Bala janam-sakhis are also to be found in the Puratan janam-sakhis.
5. Several of the sakhis common to the Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis also bear a close correspondence in the language used. A clear example of this occurs in their respective descriptions of Guru Nanak's departure from Talvaṇḍī for Sultānpur where it is plainly evident that the two accounts must

¹Pur JS, p.1. Mih JS, p.9.

be based upon identical or very similar sources.¹ It must be emphasised, however, that the degree of correspondence which is to be found in this particular case is by no means universal. Elsewhere the two janam-sākhīs diverge, both in their individual treatment of common incidents² and in the overall structure of the biography.³ In each case there are also significant incidents which the other does not record.⁴

6. Both janam-sākhīs are written in a mixture of Lahindī and Hindvī. This linguistic similarity is, however, of less importance in this particular comparison as the same compound is to be found in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs.⁵

The two janam-sākhīs accordingly have much in common and in a sense it would not be incorrect to group them together as products of a common tradition. Nevertheless, they also have their differences and it is on the basis of these that an effort must be made to assess their relative values.

¹Pur JS, sākhī 8, p.13. Mih JS, goṣṭ 24, p.73.

²E.g. the meeting with Kaliyug (Pur JS, sākhī 24, pp. 37-38; Mih JS, goṣṭ 68, pp. 221-6).

³See infra pp. 265-71.

⁴E.g. Pur JS, sākhī 23, pp. 33-37 (Nūr Shāh); Mih JS, goṣṭs 65-66, pp. 211-6 (Rameshwaram), and goṣṭs 87-106, pp. 279-356 (Ujjain and Bikaner).

⁵Piār Singh, art. Janam-sākhian Gurū Bābe Nānak jī: tulanātānik adhiain, in Kirpāl Singh's edition of the Miharbān JS, Introductory Essays, p.96.

The most apparent difference is the greater length of the Miharbān Janam-sākhi. We are here concerned with the biographical content of the two janam-sākhis and this means that the disparity is not nearly as great as might appear at first sight. Most of the Miharbān Janam-sākhi covers discourse, scripture, and interpretation, and the strictly biographical content is comparatively small. It is nonetheless greater than that of the Purātan janam-sākhis. In the account of Gurū Nānak's marriage, for example, we find in the Miharbān version a lengthy catalogue of details which almost certainly owes its origin to an understanding of how marriages are usually conducted rather than to an authentic knowledge of the manner in which this particular marriage took place.¹ In the Purātan janam-sākhis, on the other hand, the account of Gurū Nānak's marriage is dealt with in a single, brief sentence: "When Bābā was twelve he was married."²

This is an extreme case, but Miharbān's accounts are generally longer. There are two possible reasons for this. The first is that the Miharbān Janam-sākhi may have drawn from the common pool of sākhis later than the original Purātan version and that the

¹Mih JS, gost 11, pp. 29-33.

²'Tān Bābā barasān barān kā hoīā tab vīvahiā.' Pur JS, sākhi 3, p.6.

individual sākhīs had been expanded in the meantime. This would mean that the Purātan version was a more primitive one, nearer to the time when memory still played a significant part, and consequently more reliable.

The second possibility is that the additions represent the embellishments of a more sophisticated mind. There can be no doubt that the Miharbān Janam-sākhī is the work of a person of appreciably more learning than the person or persons responsible for the Purātan compilation. The less sophisticated mind would be content with the tradition as he found it, whereas a person such as Miharbān might feel compelled to embroider a simple account with details which do not materially affect the basic facts. The nature of the differences lends support to this latter possibility, but it may well be that both are true and that the Purātan version does carry us a little further back in the evolutionary process.

The other differences tend, however, to support the claims of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. In the first place there is the fact, already noted,¹ that Miharbān is more careful with his material than whoever was responsible for the Purātan collection. This applies not just to his quotations from scripture, but also to his use of

¹See supra p. 112.

place-names and the names of people with whom Gurū Nānak is purported to have conversed. We do not find in his account such places as "the land of Āsā"¹ or "the land of Dhanāsarī",² and Gurū Nānak is said to have conversed not with Pīr Bahāuddīn³ but with his grandson. In this respect, however, the difference between Miharbān's account and that of the Purātan janam-sākhī is one of degree, not an absolute one. His mistakes with scripture may be more understandable, but they are there nevertheless. There may be no lands of Āsā and Dhanāsarī, but there are numerous unidentified towns, deserts and jungles. A conversation with Pīr Bahāuddīn is an anachronism, but so too is one with his grandson. Bahāuddīn himself died in AD 1266⁴ which makes it impossible for a grandson to have been alive 250 years later.

Secondly, although both accounts contain substantial quantities of the miraculous, the miracle stories recorded in the Miharbān Janam-sākhī are, on the whole, less grotesque than those of the Purātan tradition. There is no description of Mardānā being turned into a lamb,⁵ no reference to the victory of an army

¹Pur JS, p.40.

²Ibid., p.78.

³Ibid., pp. 82, 108.

⁴T. W. Beale, An Oriental Biographical Dictionary, p.97.

⁵Pur JS, p.34.

of insects possessing human faculties over an army of men,¹ no account of Dūnī Chand's conversation with his father who had been reincarnated as a wolf,² no mention of Makhdūm Bahāuddīn's magic prayer-mat,³ and no account of Rājā Śivanābh killing and stewing his son at Gurū Nānak's command.⁴ Miharbān's janam-sākhī is by no means devoid of this kind of fantasy, but in general his miracles are of a more subdued nature.

Thirdly, Miharbān offers a more satisfactory chronology and a more likely itinerary than the Purātan janam-sākhīs. According to Miharbān there were two major udāsīs and one very brief one. During the first Gurū Nānak travelled eastwards as far as Jagannāth Purī, southwards to Rāmeshwaram, and then back to the Pañjāb up the west coast, calling at Ujjain and Bikaner on the way. The second took him northwards into the Himālayas, westwards to Mecca, and then back through Sindh. The third took him no further than Pāk Paṭṭan.

This is much more likely than the traditional pattern of the Purātan account which follows the four points of the compass. It is not at all likely that Gurū Nānak would have returned home after an eastern udāsī and then journeyed south, and nor does it

¹Pur JS, p.39.

²Ibid., pp. 71- .

³Ibid., p.82-4.

⁴Ibid., p. 88.

seem possible that he would have had sufficient time for such extensive travels. The likelihood appears to be that the Purātan pattern represents a later expression of the ancient digvijaya tradition. The term was primarily applied to a monarch's military triumphs in all four directions, but it had also acquired a hagiographic usage. In this latter sense it described the spiritual triumphs of a great saint, again with reference to the four points of the compass. Śaṅkara's biographies provide the most important illustrations of this usage¹ and it seems that the Purātan pattern of Gurū Nānak's travels provides another example. Miharbān's description of a single all-embracing tīrath-yātrā is inherently more probable and offers a more reasonable time schedule. Moreover, Miharbān is supported by the brief outline which Bhaī Gurdās gives.

Fourthly, it is worth noting that Miharbān, for all his schismatic connections, was a grandson of Gurū Rām Dās and a great-grandson of Gurū Amar Dās. The relationship would probably have meant access to relatively reliable traditions which might well have been denied to whoever gathered the Purātan material. This is an assumption, not a proven fact, but it is a reasonable assumption.

¹ L. Renou and J. Filliozat, L'Inde Classique, vol. ii, p.20. I owe this comparison with the digvijaya tradition to my supervisor, Professor A. L. Basham.

These points would seem to indicate that of the three oldest sources the Miharbān Janam-sākhī is the most important. Before any conclusions are drawn, however, two of the arguments must be qualified. The second is qualified by the fact that the India Office Library manuscript B40, to which we have granted a Purātan affiliation, omits all but one of the miracles which are listed above;¹ and the force of the third is greatly reduced by the existence of a third possibility which is much more likely than either of the itineraries offered by the Purātan tradition on the one hand or Miharbān on the other. This third possibility is that neither of the collections are based upon a knowledge of the routes followed by Gurū Nānak in his travels, but represent instead patterns which were evolved by grouping the available sākhīs in a reasonable sequence.² Miharbān's more rational grouping probably amounts to no more than another example of his greater sophistication.

Even with these qualifications the arguments in favour of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī still seem to indicate that of the three oldest sources it is the most satisfactory. The margin dividing the

¹The exception is the changing of Mardānā into a sheep. IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folio 83. This Ms agrees with the Bhāi Bālā and GR versions in having him turned into a ram, not a lamb.

²See infra pp. 433-4.

Purātan manuscripts and the Miharbān Janam-sākhī is, however, slender, and with the India Office Library B40 manuscript added to the Purātan group it virtually disappears. The differences are important not so much as a yardstick for measuring relative superiority, as a means of testing the reliability of individual sākhīs. Agreement between all versions may strengthen the claims of a sākhī and disagreement will have the opposite effect. Occasionally this factor is of appreciable significance, although generally in the negative sense.

Two things may be said with assurance. The first is that the normal practice of relying on the Purātan janam-sākhīs cannot produce reliable biography. The second is that any effort to use the Miharbān Janam-sākhī in the same way will be equally unsatisfactory. Both janam-sākhīs are thoroughly inadequate sources and yet we are compelled to use them as best we can, for there is nothing better.

The Bhāi Bālā Janam-sākhīs

The janam-sākhīs of the Bhāi Bālā tradition warrant an examination, not because they possess any intrinsic reliability, but because of the immense influence they have exercised in determining what has generally been accepted as the authoritative account of Gurū Nānak's life. Throughout the nineteenth century,

until the discovery of the Purātan manuscripts, the authority of the Bhāī Bālā version was unchallenged and even after the Purātan tradition had won general acceptance the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs continued to supply many of the incidents required to fill out the relatively brief accounts given by the Purātan manuscripts. Even Macauliffe used them, in spite of his slighting remarks concerning the claims of the Bhāī Bālā version to be the earliest of all janam-sākhīs.¹ Khazān Singh, whose two volume History and Philosophy of Sikhism was published in 1914, avowedly accepted the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs as his principal authority for the life of Gurū Nānak.

The most complete and trustworthy biography is that written by Paira Mokha at the dictation of Bhāī Bala who was a companion of Guru Nānak, especially in his travels, excepting the western tour towards Makka and Medina We cannot say that the Janam Sākhī contains the whole and entire account of the Guru's life and his hymns, but we are prepared to assert that it contains a good deal of them.²

This opinion concerning the reliability of the Bhāī Bālā version cannot possibly be accepted. On the contrary, it is of all the janam-sākhīs the least trustworthy. It contains countless

¹Macauliffe i.lxxviii-ix. See infra pp.279-88.

²Loc.cit., vol. i, pp. 18-19.

errors¹ and the fabulous material which it incorporates far exceeds that of the other janam-sākhīs, both in quantity and in degree. The legendary accretions are particularly prominent in its description of Gurū Nānak's mountain-climbing expeditions and of his visits to various Purāṇic khaṇḍs and dīps.² Another illustration of the Bhāī Bālā variety of fantasy is its account of Gurū Nānak's ride on a fish measuring thirty-five kos in length and five kos in breadth.³ The fish turns out to be a former Sikh who had been reincarnated in this form as a result of Gurū Nānak having once commented that he writhed like a fish whenever he was instructed to do anything.⁴

One determined attack has been directed against the Bhāī Bālā tradition. This was made by Sardār Karam Singh in 1913. His Kattak ki Visākh was primarily concerned to prove that Gurū Nānak

¹Karam Singh lists many of these in his Kattak ki Visākh under the following headings:

Impossible things	pp. 36- 66
Geographical errors	pp. 66- 72
Astronomical errors	pp. 72- 76
Chronological errors	pp. 93-100
Astrological errors	pp. 101-110
Historical errors	pp. 110-138

²BB JS, pp. 200 ff. See especially pp. 265-68.

³The actual length of a kos or koh has never been fixed, but an equivalent of two miles is generally a satisfactory estimate.

⁴BB JS, pp. 137-40.

was born in the month of Vaisākh, and not in Kārtik, but practically the whole of the book consists of a vigorous attack upon the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs, the source of the Kārtik tradition. Karam Singh overstated his case, his book contains several errors of fact, and his whole method of argument is open to serious question,¹ but Kattak ki Visākh is nevertheless a work of considerable importance as far as both the date of birth question and that of the authenticity of the Bhāi Bālā tradition are concerned. And yet Bhāi Bālā has lived on. Later authors, such as Kartār Singh,² while generally accepting Karam Singh's argument concerning the date of birth, have continued to follow the Macauliffe pattern of using Bhāi Bālā material to augment the Purātan tradition.³

There are many printed editions of Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs available, but manuscript copies are not numerous. Karam Singh's estimate was a maximum of thirty, all of them evidently Hindālī versions.⁴ One of these, found at Jagrāvin, bears the date S.1781

¹"At the commencement of our investigation we observe that the available janam-sākhīs are of two kinds, one which is represented solely by the Bhāi Bālā Janam-sākhī. Obviously both kinds of janam-sākhī cannot be correct. One of them must assuredly be incorrect. Needless to say, if one can be proved to be incorrect the truth of the other is established automatically." Loc. cit., pp. 12-13. He then proceeds to demolish the Bhāi Bālā tradition.

²Life of Guru Nanak Dev.

³Sewaram Singh, The Divine Master, does not accept even the date of birth argument. (Loc. cit., p.19, n *.)

⁴See infra pp. 145-6 for the Hindālis.

(AD 1724) and Karam Singh appears to have accepted this as authentic.¹ There are three such manuscripts in London, one each in the India Office Library,² the British Museum,³ and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies.⁴ The first of these was used by Trumpp and translations of some of its opening and closing sākhs are given in his The Ādi Granth.⁵

The printed editions are difficult to classify as they vary considerably. The copies which are available in London fall into four groups. The briefest of the printed editions is represented by three copies in the India Office Library dated AD 1871, 1874, and 1886.⁶ The second category comprises an expanded version lithographed by Dīvān Būṭa Singh of Lahore in AD 1871 and another edition lithographed in Lahore in AD 1890 and published by Charāguddīn and Surājuddīn. Thirdly, there is an even longer

¹Kattak ki Visākh, p.189. He is, however, inconsistent as on p.90 he states that there is only one Ms. predating S.1800 and this he gives as one dated S.1794 (AD 1737) found at Jandīālā.

²IO Library Ms Panj. B41, S2885. See Appendix 2, p. 626.

³Or.2754.I. See Appendix 2, p. 626.

⁴Ms. no. 104975. See Appendix 2, p. 627.

⁵Loc.cit., p.vii n.1 and pp. xlvi-lxxvi.

⁶IO Library Panj.1522, Panj.30.E.3, and Panj.1523 respectively.

version published in AD 1890 by Maulvī Maibūb Ahmad of Lahore. Fourthly, there are the modern versions which are on sale today. The best available examples of this category are the editions published by Munshī Gulab Singh and Sons of Lahore.

None of these printed editions are accurate copies of any known Bhāi Bālā manuscript. All of them are, to some extent at least, modern janam-sākhīs based on the Bhāi Bālā tradition. The first group does, however, come close to the India Office Library's manuscript Panj. B41, although it is not, as Trumpp claimed, "nearly identical".¹ The greater part of the edition does warrant this description, but there are some significant differences which must be noted.

The first is the group of four sākhīs which are printed on pages 103-119. These four, Triā rāj dī sākhī, Kaliyug dī sākhī, Kīr nagar dī sākhī, and the discourse with Sheikh Farīd in Āsā Deś,² have been taken directly from a Purātan manuscript, presumably by the printer. The B41 manuscript does contain a Triā rāj dī sākhī, but it is a much briefer and simpler version.³ The printed

¹Op.cit., p.lii, n.1.

²See infra pp. 282-7 , numbers 46, 56, 105, and 108.

³This is one point at which the Bhāi Bālā tradition evidently gives an earlier version than the Purātan janam-sākhīs. IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 70b-71b.

edition begins by following this version, but soon moves into the more detailed and rather more fabulous Purātan account.¹ The other three sakhīs are completely lacking in the manuscript.

The second important difference is that, unlike the manuscript, the printed edition includes the miracle of the moving mosque in its Mecca sakhī,² once again making a direct borrowing from a Purātan manuscript. The B41 manuscript sets this particular miracle in Medina,³ and the printed edition illogically repeats it in this context.⁴

Thirdly, the printed edition introduces as its sakhī 66 the Purātan account of Guru Nanak's discourse with Sheikh Sharaf of Pāṇipat.⁵ The B41 manuscript also has a sakhī concerning Sheikh Sharaf in the same position as far as the sakhī sequence is concerned,⁶ but it is an entirely different discourse and Sheikh Sharaf is said to be Bidar sahar dā dakhāṇ dī dharatī, "from the city of Bidar in the south country".⁷ Once again the printed edition fails to harmonise

¹BB JS, sakhī 23, pp. 99-101.

²BB JS, sakhī 39, pp. 184-5. For the miracle see supra p.390-1.

³IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 122a.

⁴BB JS, sakhī 40, p.188.

⁵BB JS, pp. 296-300.

⁶IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 187a-187b.

⁷Ibid., folio 187a.

its sources, for in the next sākhi it follows the manuscript in describing Sheikh Sharaf as Sharaf Paṭhān Dakhānī.¹ Another divergence at this point is the printed edition's omission of a discourse with a certain Dīna Nath which is the manuscript immediately follows the Sheikh Sharaf sākhi.²

Fourthly, there is yet another Purāṭan borrowing on pages 327-35 of the printed edition, where sākhi 74 is Gurū jī nū karorī milyā³ and sākhi 75 is Gurū jī kaśamīr gae.⁴ In this case the manuscript gives two sākhis, set respectively in Talvaṇḍī and Pokho dī Randhāvā, which do not appear in the printed edition.⁵

Fifthly, the printed edition has dropped the Hindālī references from its account of Gurū Nānak's travels in Purāṇic regions.⁶ Finally, a difference which Trumpp does note, the manuscript does not include the sākhis which describe Gurū Nānak's death.

¹BB JS, p.300.

²IO Library Ms Panj. B.41, folios 187b-190a.

³"The Gurūjī meets a wealthy man", corresponding to the Pur JS's sākhi 37. (See infra p.287, nos. 113 and 114.) The BB JS version does not name the wealthy man Dunīchand, but it includes both portions of the sākhi.

⁴"The Gurūjī went to Kashmīr", corresponding to the Pur JS's sākhi 49. (See infra p.284, no. 71.)

⁵IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 214b-217a and 217a-219b.

⁶Cf IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 166b-168a, and BB JS, pp. 262-65. For Hindālī references see infra pp.146-7.

Instead it concludes with an account of how, on a certain occasion, favour was bestowed upon Gurū Aṅgad for having deliberately mis-reported the hour of night to Gurū Nānak, a story of how Gurū Nānak once requested Gurū Aṅgad's daughter, and some remarks in praise of Kabīr.¹

These are the principal differences which distinguish the lithographed version which was published in 1871, 1874, and 1886, and the India Office Library manuscript B41. Numerous other variants are to be found, but they are of less significance. It is to the earliest of the lithographed editions, the one which was published by Hāfaz Kutub Dīn of Lahore in 1871, that reference will normally be made in the section dealing with the life of Gurū Nānak. Occasional reference will also be made to two other editions. These are the edition published by Dīvān Būḡā Singh of Lahore in AD 1871 which, to distinguish it from the Hāfaz Kutub Dīn edition, will be referred to as "the expanded 1871 edition", and, as a representative of the fourth group, an edition published by Munshī Gulāb Singh and Sons in AD 1942.

¹IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 250a-252b. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, pp. lxxiv-v, translates the two stories, but not the remarks concerning Kabīr. All three probably represent Hindālī efforts to denigrate Gurū Nānak. (See infra p.147.). The second story, a particularly malicious one, does not appear in the BM Ms. Or.2754.I. The SOAS Ms. omits the entire sakhī which contains the two stories and the Kabīr references.

The four groups of printed Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs are distinguished by the quantity of extra material which has been added to each successive edition and, to a much lesser degree, by the nature of the material which has been omitted. The 1871 edition which, as we have already noted, includes material which is not in the B41 manuscript, contains 90 sākhīs. The enlarged 1871 edition has 311 sākhīs¹ and the 1890 edition of the third group has 495 sākhīs. In the modern version the number is reduced to 183, but a high proportion of the material has been retained and some new sākhīs have been added. There has also been a progressive modernisation of language since the 1871 edition.

The manner in which the printers have altered successive versions is also illustrated by the differing dates which are given for the compilation of the original janam-sākhī.² The manuscript copies all give S.1582 (AD 1525),³ a manifestly impossible date as the manuscripts also claim that the janam-sākhī was dictated in the presence of Gurū Aṅgad after the death of Gurū Nānak, an event which

¹The JS concludes with sākhī 301, but the numbers 165-174 inclusive have been used twice.

²This date is given in each case at the very beginning of the JS.

³IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 1a.

took place in AD 1538 or 1539. The 1871, 1874, and 1886 editions repeat this date, but it appears that the printers of the expanded 1871 edition recognised the **anachronism**. They did not, however, invent their own date, but instead appear to have decided that the 8 must be a 9 and accordingly printed S.1592 (AD 1535).¹ This, however, still left the anachronism. The 1890 enlarged edition changed the date again and printed S.1597 (AD 1540).² This fits the chronology of Gurū Aṅgad's succession, but does not alter the fact that the manuscripts give a different date.

The origin of the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhī

The first question which arises in connection with the beginnings of this tradition is the claim that the original Bhāi Bālā Janam-sākhī was dictated by Bhāi Bālā, a companion of Gurū Nānak, in the presence of Gurū Aṅgad, and that accordingly it represented an eye-witness account of the life of the first Gurū. The undermining of this claim involves no great difficulty and the

¹ Bhāi Bālā JS, Dīvān Būṭā Singh, Lahore, p.1. The two figures 8 and 9 are very similar in Gurmukhī.

² Bhāi Bālā JS, edition published by Maulvi Maibūb Ahmad, Lahore, p.1.

question then arises of a satisfactory substitute. Two theories have been advanced to account for the origin of the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhī. One is that the original Janam-sākhī was composed by the heretical sect of Hindālīs during the first half of the seventeenth century; and the other is that a janam-sākhī of unknown but early origin was interpolated by the Hindālīs.

The claim to be an eye-witness account related before Gurū Aṅgad is made at the beginning of every Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhī. Gurū Aṅgad is represented as expressing a desire to meet a Sikh who can tell him when Gurū Nānak was born. Bhāi Buḍhā at once suggested Bālā Sandhū, a Jaṭ of Gurū Nānak's own village, Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī. Bālā was duly summoned to Gurū Aṅgad's presence in Khaḍūr and in response to the Gurū's enquiry claimed that he was three years younger than Gurū Nānak and that he had witnessed all his travels throughout the world. When asked if he knew Gurū Nānak's date of birth he replied that he did not, but that he had heard from many people that it was Kattak Pūranmāsī¹ and that the Gurū's father, Kālū, had had a janam-patri² prepared. Gurū Aṅgad requested him to search for the janam-patri. He returned to Tal-

¹The full moon day in the month of Kattak or Kārtik.

²A horoscope or birth-chart. The word is sometimes used as a synonym for janam-sākhī.

vaṇḍī and discovered the document in the possession of Kālū's brother, Lālū. When he opened it Gurū Aṅgad found that it had been written in Śāstrī (Deva-nāgarī) characters. He asked for a Sikh who could read both Śāstrī and Gurmukhī, and Paīṛā, a Mokhā Khatrī, was accordingly summoned from Sultānpur. Gurū Aṅgad then convened an assembly and the writing of the janam-sākhī began.¹

All of this is contained in the first sākhī, and the contents of the janam-pātrī are evidently intended to be incorporated in the second sākhī. It is with the third sākhī that Bhāī Bālā's own dictation is apparently meant to begin. Further on this is made explicit when the author declares, "This of which I speak I saw with my own eyes. I do not speak of what I merely heard."² Bhāī Bālā's account continues up to the point where Gurū Aṅgad himself enters the story. The Gurū then completes the account for Bhāī Bālā's benefit.³

There can be no question of this claim being upheld. In the first place, as has already been noted,⁴ the manuscript copies

¹BB JS, pp. 1-7.

²'Tā Bālā Sandhū kahīā jī Gurū jī e jo mai tusā pāsi ākhadā hā so mai āpane akhīh jaradīā galā ākhadā. Mai suṇīā galā nahī ākhadā.' IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 31b. BB JS, p.46.

³BB JS, pp. 380 ff.

⁴See supra p. 139.

give an impossibly early date for the alleged interview with Gurū Aṅgad. Khazān Singh suggested that the Hindālīs deliberately changed the date of the janam-sākhī's compilation "to give it a dubious character".¹ This could not have been the case. The Hindālīs would have wanted their janam-sākhī to appear authentic, for otherwise it could not have served their purposes.

Secondly, as Macauliffe points out,² had Bālā been the constant companion of Gurū Nānak it is inconceivable that he would have been unaware of the identity of the Gurū's successor, and that Gurū Aṅgad should have had to ask him who he was. Such, however, is the testimony of the janam-sākhīs.

Thirdly, there is the fact that Bhāī Gurdās, the Puratan janam-sākhī, and the Miharban Janam-sākhī all omit any reference to Bhāī Bālā. Bhāī Gurdās's failure to refer to him is of particular significance in that he omits Bālā's name not only from his first Vār, but also from his eleventh Vār in which he lists the prominent followers of the first six Gurūs.³ In the first Vār he

¹History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol.i, p.20.

²Macauliffe i.lxxix.

³The significance of this omission is generally discounted on the grounds that Rāi Bulār, the landlord of Gurū Nānak's village, Talvaṇḍī, is also omitted. This assumes, however, that the JS record concerning Rāi Bulār is correct in depicting him as an ardent admirer of the Gurū. See infra pp346-7. Another theory claims that the word bāl which occurs in the first line of Vār 11:13 is a form of bālā, abbreviated in order to satisfy the requirements

plainly indicates that during the western udāsī at least Bālā was not with Guru Nānak.

Phiri Bābā gaiā Bagadāda no bāhari jāi kiā asathānā;
Ika Bābā Akāla rūpu dūjā rabābī Maradānā.¹

Bābā (Nānak) then proceeded to Baghdad and going outside (the city) he set up camp. (There were two people), one Bābā (Nānak), the image of the Timeless One, and the other Mardānā, the rabābī.

The printed edition of the Gyān-ratanavālī which is available in London² does mention Bhāī Bālā, but the sākhīs in which his name occurs are clearly interpolations which have been taken from the Bhāī Bālā tradition. The account it gives of the first udāsī omits all reference to him until towards the end, where he suddenly appears in a group of sākhīs which are an almost exact copy from the expanded 1871 edition of the Bhāī Bālā version.³ He reappears in two other groups of sākhīs, but again it is evident

(cont.) of metre, and that accordingly it stands for Bhāī Bālā.

Tārū popaṭu tariā guramukhi bālā subhāi udāsī.

This theory is exceedingly unlikely, for the word makes perfectly good sense if accepted as bāl, 'child'. See infra p. 190.

¹Var 1:35. See infra p. 183.

²See infra p. 155, n.1.

³The BB JS version (sākhī 31, pp. 127-37) is similar, but lacks the very close correspondence of the expanded 1871 edition.

that these have been added subsequently.¹ The Mahimā Prakāś likewise fails to provide any support, for it mentions Bālā only once in connection with Gurū Nānak. The reference occurs in Kartārpur vasana dī sakhī² and relates simply that Bālā went to live in Kartārpur after Gurū Nānak had returned from his travels.³

The conclusion which must follow is that the janam-sakhis' own account of their origin must be rejected. The evidence all indicates that even if such a person as Bhāi Bālā did exist he could not possibly have been an eye-witness of Gurū Nānak's travels, and with Bālā eliminated the story of the dictation before Gurū Aṅgad collapses. How then did this tradition develop? Did it originate with a Hindālī composition or did the Hindālīs corrupt an earlier janam-sakhī?

The heretical sect of Hindālīs, or Nirāñjanīs, developed out of the enmity of a certain Bidhī Chand, the son of Bābā Hindāl of Jaṇḍiālā⁴ and a contemporary of Gurū Hargobind. Hindāl himself

¹ See infra pp. 167 ff.

² Karam Singh, Kattak ki Visakh, p. 221. The writer does not indicate which of the Mahima Prakas versions he is referring to, the Vāratak or the Kavita, but presumably it is the latter. For the Mahima Prakas see infra pp. 172-4.

³ MK Addendum, p. 77 (n. 2 of p. 643). There is also one reference to Bālā in connection with Gurū Aṅgad. (Karam Singh, op.cit., p. 221.)

⁴ A small town on the Grand Trunk Road, 11 miles east of Amritsar. MK, p. 404.

is said to have been converted by Gurū Amar Dās¹ and to have displayed such loyalty, particularly through his service in the Gurū's laṅgar, that he was appointed to a mañjī. His son Bidhī Chand, however, married a Muslim woman and evidently responded to the reproaches of the Sikhs by turning apostate. Jandīālā became a centre of malignant opposition to the Gurūs and the mutual enmity which developed persisted until the Hindālī sect eventually declined into insignificance. During the period of Muhammadan persecution the Hindālīs disclaimed the title of Sikh and when Ahmad Shāh descended upon the Pañjāb they gave him their active support against the Khālṣā.²

There can be no doubt that the Bhāī Bālā Janam-sākhī as it has survived in manuscript form represents a Hindālī version of the life of Gurū Nānak.³ This is not the case with the printed versions, for the publishers have purged almost all the references which expressed or seemed to imply Hindālī enmity towards Gurū Nānak,⁴ but the manuscript versions have whole sākhīs

¹Kanh Singh's account (MK, p.535) is confused at this point for it also states that Hindāl was born in S.1630 (AD 1573). Gurū Amar Dās died in S.1631 (AD 1574).

²MK, p.535. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c, vol. ii, pp. 325-6. Ganḍa Singh, Ahmad Shah Durrani, pp. 275-6.

³Macauliffe implies the existence of two separate janam-sākhīs, a Bhāī Bālā JS (p.lxxix) and a Hindālī JS (p.lxxx). This is incorrect.

⁴One such reference still appears in Sākhī 48 (Prahlād bhagat nāl hoī) of the modern Bhāī Bālā editions. (Munshi Gulab Singh and Sons, 1942 edition, p.248.)

and a number of briefer references which were evidently intended to exalt Bābā Hindāl (and consequently the sect bearing his name) and to denigrate Gurū Nānak at the expense of Kabīr and Hindāl.¹

Karam Singh's interpretation of these derogatory references was that they represented an integral part of a Hindālī janam-sākhī deliberately composed as a part of the sect's campaign against the orthodox Sikhs.² He agrees that the author or authors

¹Karam Singh gives some examples in Kattak ki Visākh, pp. 15-21 and 194-200. See also Macauliffe i.lxxxi-ii. The three Bhai Bālā MSS in London all include the sākhī related by Macauliffe, a conversation with Dhurū and a meeting with Kabīr in Sach Khand. Gurū Nānak is said to declare to Dhurū:

Age hūā aba bhī hoi, ika Kambīrā Nānaka doi;
Tijā hora Handāla jāṭejā, jānko āpu Nirāñjana bheṭā;
Aisī kirapā karī Kambīra, to dūjai Nānaka bandhī dhīra.

- BM Ms. Or.2754.I, folio 162a-b.

The same verse appears, with minor modifications, in the IO Library Ms. Panj. B41, folio 166b, and in the SOAS Ms 104975, folio 198a. The 1871 lithographed edition includes this sākhī, but in an abbreviated form which omits these lines and anything else which might be interpreted as denigration of Gurū Nānak. Handāl's name has disappeared completely. (BB JS, sākhī 53, pp. 262-65.) The expanded 1871 edition has dropped the sākhī altogether.

The concluding sākhī of the IO Library Ms. B41, folios 250a-251b, contains two stories which reflect discredibly upon Gurū Nānak and which may well be of Hindālī origin. (See supra p.138.) These stories are, however, later additions. Unlike the sākhī concerning Dhurū and Kabīr they are in no sense an integral part of the JS as they occur at the very end and bear no evident relationship to their context. The BM Ms., as already noted, includes only the first of the two stories and the SOAS Ms. has neither of them.

²Karam Singh, op.cit., pp. 194, 210.

must have used at least one other janam-sākhi, but claims that this was a Purātan version, not an original Bhāi Bālā Janam-sākhi. This makes it clear that when Karam Singh refers to an original Hindālī janam-sākhi he does not mean one which owed its entire origin to the sect. This, as he was bound to recognise, could not possibly have been the case. The question now seems to resolve itself into one of whether the Hindālīs made additions to the existing Purātan tradition, or whether they interpolated a janam-sākhi which represented a pre-Hindālī Bhāi Bālā tradition.

Even this, however, does not constitute a sufficient clarification. The Bhāi Bālā and Purātan traditions do have many sākhis in common, but what we find in the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhis are the results not of an expansion of the Purātan tradition, but of a later selection from the common pool of sākhis. As time passed sākhis of an increasingly fantastic nature must have been added to those which developed earlier, and many of the earlier sākhis must have been transformed by the addition of correspondingly fantastic details. It can be argued that portions of the Bhāi Bālā material have a Purātan source, but much the greater part of it represents a selection from the common pool after it was well stocked with fabulous incidents. This does not necessarily mean that the Bhāi Bālā version invariably represents a later and more developed form than the Purātan version. In most cases this appears to be true,¹

¹The most obvious example is the sākhi concerning Jhaṇḍā Bāḍhī. (IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folios 88a-100a. BB JS, sākhi 34, pp. 142-57.) See infra pp. 313-4.

but in some the Bhāi Bālā tradition evidently carries us further back than either the Colebrooke or Hafizābād manuscripts. The Triā rāj dī sākhi is a clear example¹ and the Bhāi Bālā version of the story of Rājā Śivanābh appears to be another.² In the latter case the location is given as Ceylon and a reference is made to the writing of the Prāṇ Saṅgalī, but the story is related in a much briefer and simpler form than that of the Purātan janam-sākhis.

The Bhāi Bālā tradition is accordingly related to that of the Purātan janam-sākhis in that both represent selections from the same common pool of oral sākhis, but it is also independent of it and its independence is more striking than any resemblances. The question is, who was responsible for making this later selection? Did the Hindālīs do it, or had such a janam-sākhi already been compiled by somebody else?

The issue really narrows down to the person of Bhāi Bālā, the connecting link, for the actual incidents (apart from the few which are obviously of Hindālī origin) were common property. Was he, as Karam Singh claimed, a Hindālī invention, or had he appeared earlier? It is a question to which a final answer cannot be given. On the one hand there is the obvious difficulty in accepting a theory which requires us to believe that the Sikh community could

¹See infra pp. 163-4.

²BB JS, pp. 120-3.

have been so completely duped by such a trick. On the other hand there is the fact that no manuscript copies of a pre-Hindālī Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī have ever been found. This has been attributed to the success of the Hindālīs in having all but their own version suppressed,¹ but the explanation overlooks the survival of Purātan and Miharbān manuscripts.

This ultimate issue is, however, interesting rather than important. The point of real significance is the evident fact that we have in the recorded versions of the Bhāī Bālā tradition the results of a relatively late selection from the common pool.

The popularity of the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs

There would be little point in discussing this tradition at such length were it not for the great popularity it has enjoyed and the considerable influence it has consequently exercised. Karam Singh's theory was that it owed this popularity to the Nānak Prakāś which Santokh Singh completed in S.1880 (AD 1823).²

¹Khazān Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol.i, p.12.

²The Gur Nānak Prakāś, commonly called the Nānak Prakāś, and like its principal source a work of very marked influence. Its lengthy sequel, the Gur Pratāp Suraj, commonly referred to as the Suraj Prakāś, which carries the account up to the tenth Gurū, contains a somewhat higher proportion of historical fact, but is untrustworthy nonetheless. The Suraj Prakāś was completed in S.1901 (AD 1844). Both works are in metre and have been edited in thirteen volumes by Vir Singh. For a note on Santokh Singh's life see Macauliffe i.lxxvi-ii.

Prior to this date, Karam Singh claims, the Bhāi Bālā tradition was largely ignored. Santokh Singh did not accept the absolute authenticity of the Bhāi Bālā account, but he did accept its claim to have been originally written at the behest of Gurū Angad and accordingly followed it very closely in the Nānak Prakāś. Other Sikhs subsequently drew the conclusion that if the sakhīs which included the name of Bābā Hindāl were to be omitted the result would be the janam-sākhī which had been dictated before Gurū Angad. The actual cuts and alterations were made by presses which proceeded to print and distribute edition after edition. The result was that these printed versions came to be accepted by the people as the authentic, and indeed only, account of the life of Gurū Nānak and they acquired an immense popularity.¹

We may accept the theory that the Nānak Prakāś did much to popularise the Bhāi Bālā tradition, but it is going too far to suggest that it would otherwise have remained in obscurity. It was evidently more widely known before 1823 than Karam Singh acknowledges and he is mistaken when he claims that Malcolm, writing in 1805, did not refer to it.² Regardless of the reasons, however, its popularity has been unmistakable and continues among the Sikhs

¹Karam Singh, op.cit., pp. 190-3.

²Ibid., pp. 190-1. Malcolm refers to Bālā Sandhū by name and quotes him on p.10 of his Sketch of the Sikhs.

to this day. It is certainly a fascinating work, but it is of only limited help in the search for the historical Nānak. Its relatively modern language, its spurious claim to represent an eye-witness account, the silence of the older janam-sākhīs concerning the person of Bhāī Bālā, the high proportion of fabulous material which it contains, and the numerous errors to be found in it combine to render the Bhāī Bālā tradition thoroughly unreliable.

The Gyān-ratanāvalī or Manī Singh Janam-sākhī

The Purātan, Miharban, and Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs represent the three major traditions, but there is a fourth collection which should also be considered. This is the Gyān-ratanāvalī, a janam-sākhī attributed to Bhāī Manī Singh. The Gyān-ratanāvalī claims as its basis Bhāī Gurdas's Var 1, but expands it very considerably by drawing substantial quantities of material from other sources, the chief of which appears to have been the contemporary source of oral sākhīs.

The Gyān-ratanāvalī has not been totally ignored in the manner of the Miharban Janam-sākhī and indeed it evidently gathered to itself a considerable measure of respect. It was, however, a reputation based on awe rather than upon usage and the practical attention it has received has been relatively slight. This is difficult

to understand, for unlike the Miharbān Janam-sākhī it has had no taint of heresy attached to it. On the contrary, it has been accepted as the work of one who ranks high amongst loyal Sikhs and who wrote the janam-sākhī with the explicit intention of correcting heretical accounts of Gurū Nānak's life.

One possible reason may be the occasional references to what Sikh readers would regard as disreputable mythology. A prominent example of this is a story concerning a dispute between Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiv which Gurū Nānak is purported to have related to Sheikh Brahm of Pāk Paṭṭan.¹ The dispute concerned the right, claimed by all three, to be regarded as Īśvar, and Śiv's method of settling it was a proposal that the one who could measure the length of his liṅg should be granted the title. Such a sākhī would cause understandable offence to many Sikhs and yet this feature of the janam-sākhī does not seem an adequate explanation for its neglect. It is by no means a prominent feature and such instances may be, and have been, regarded as interpolations.² Moreover, it is not difficult to find references in the other janam-sākhīs which, although of a different nature, are just as uncharacteristic of Gurū Nānak and just as likely to give offence.

¹GR, pp. 63-4.

²MK, p.377.

A more likely explanation is that the earlier portions of the Gyan-ratanāvalī were collected during a period of political disturbance which inhibited their circulation. These circumstances would not necessarily have had the same effect upon the Bhai Bala janam-sakhis for the first half of the eighteenth century was the period of Hindālī influence. By the time more settled conditions returned the Bhai Bala version had evidently established itself in the affections of the Sikhs and the need for other versions was no longer recognised.

Whatever the reasons, the Gyan-ratanāvalī was certainly unable to hold its own against the Bhai Bala janam-sakhis or, in more recent times, the Puratan janam-sakhis. Manuscript copies and printed editions are few¹ and it appears that no critical analysis of it has ever been published.² There are unfortunately

¹The Sikh History Research Department of Khālsā College, Amritsar, possesses two Ms copies of the Gyan-ratanāvalī. (1) SHR: 2300C, dated S.1891 (AD 1834). (2) SHR: 1440, dated S.1895 (AD 1838). A Catalogue of Punjabi and Urdu Manuscripts in the Sikh History Research Department upto March 31, 1963, pp.5-6. According to Volker Moeller, Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. vii, no. 4, p.265, n.1, there is also a Ms copy in the Panjab Public Library, Ms B.217, dated 1883. He does not indicate whether the dating is Samvat or AD. In a marginal note commenting on the date of birth recorded in the Gyan-ratanāvalī the printer of the 1891 edition has referred to "many janam-sakhis of Bhai Mani Singh": 'Bhai Mani Singh ji dian bahut janam-sakhian dekhian par vasakh da mahina hi nikalia siisi vasti likhia hai.' (Loc.cit., p.41.)

²Kanh Singh in MK gives it a single sentence on p.326 and a brief reference on p.377. Macauliffe i.lxxv devotes only a part of a single paragraph to it and all but one sentence of this is a summary

no manuscript copies of the work in London, but there are copies of a printed edition.¹ Conclusions which may be reached on the basis of a printed edition can be no more than tentative, but it does appear that this particular edition is a reasonably faithful representation of the tradition as it appears in manuscript form. A brief description of the Gyan-ratanavali given by Sardar Piār Singh of Amritsar accords wholly with the nature of the printed edition available in London.² Professor Kirpāl Singh makes the following comment on the manuscript SHR:2300C :

This manuscript has been printed and there does (sic) not much difference in the printed copy and this manuscript.³

Bhāi Mani Singh, to whom the Gyan-ratanavali is attributed, was a famous Sikh of Gurū Gobind Singh's time,⁴ and the circum-

(cont.) account of the traditional origin of the work. Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.301, deals with it in two sentences and confuses it with the Bhagat-ratanavali, a separate work which is also attributed to Mani Singh, but which is an expanded version of Bhāi Gurdās's eleventh Var.

¹An edition lithographed in Lahore in AD 1891 by Charāguddīn and Sarājuddīn. Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh of Paṭiālā has informed the writer that there is only one other printed edition, a letterpress edition published by Munshī Gulāb Singh and Sons of Lahore in AD 1907. The two editions are, he writes, substantially the same.

²Piār Singh, Art. "Janam-sākhian Gurū Bābe Nānak jī: tulanātamik adhiain" in Kirpāl Singh's edition of the Miharban JS, Introductory Essays, p.95.

³Catalogue of Punjabi and Urdu Manuscripts in the Sikh History Research Department upto March 31, 1963, p.6.

⁴MK, p.712, and Macauliffe i.lxxiv-vi give brief biographies. Both evidently rely on Gyan Singh's Panth Prakāś and the details should accordingly be treated with some caution.

stances which are said to have led him to write it are set out in the introduction to the janam-sākhī.

The Nām is the God of gods. Some believe in a goddess, some in Śiv, some in Gapeś, and some in other gods. The Gurū's Sikhs worship the Sati Nām and as a result all obstacles are destroyed. And so it is the Sati Nām which has been invoked at the beginning.

THE SIKHS ONCE MADE A REQUEST TO BHAI MANI SINGH, (saying), 'The Chhoṭe Mel Vālē¹ have in several places (saying), 'The Chhoṭe Mel Vālē have in several places introduced errors into the record of the first Master's discourses and life, and as a result of hearing these the Sikhs' faith in the Gurū is declining. Just as milk is adulterated with water and the swan separates the two, so you be our Great Swan and please separate the Gurū's words from those of the Miṇās.'² Bhāi Mani Singh replied, 'At the time when the fifth Master established the canon of Sri Granth Sahib the Sikhs besought him, (saying), 'There is no authenticated version of the discourses. The Pañj Mel Vālē³ have all interpolated objectionable things in the janam-sākhī and are leading the Sikhs astray.' Bhāi Gurdās was instructed to write a janam-sākhī in the form of a var so that by means of the var the Gurū's Sikhs might hear and read the record (of the Gurū's life). Bhāi Gurdās's Var, the Gyan-ratanāvalī, is a janam-sākhī.' The Sikhs then said, 'He has written (simply) the record. You please give us an expanded commentary on it so that faith may arise in the Sikhs who hear it.' Bhāi Mani Singh replied, 'Just as an ant cannot lift an elephant's burden and a turtle cannot raise Mount Mundrachal, so I am unable to prepare a commentary on the discourses of Bābā (Nanak). But just as swimmers fix reeds in the river so that those who do not know the way may also cross, so I shall take Bhāi Gurdās's Var as my basis and in accordance with it, and with

¹See supra p. 104, n.1.

²See supra p. 100.

³See supra p. 104.

the accounts which I have heard at the court of the tenth Master, I shall relate to you whatever commentary issues from my humble mind.¹

On the very last page it is stated that the completed work was taken to Gurū Gobind Singh for his imprimatur. The Gurū, it is said, duly signed it and commended it as a means of acquiring knowledge of Sikh belief.²

This is the Gyan-ratanāvalī's own account of its origin. The claim is that Bhāī Manī Singh took Vār 1 as his basis, that he supplemented it with sākhīs he had heard related at the court of Gurū Gobind Singh, and that he presented the completed work to the Gurū for his approval. Gurū Gobind Singh was Gurū from 1666 until 1708. If the janam-sākhī's own claim is to be accepted its date of composition must accordingly lie within the intervening period.

The claim has been generally accepted and there can be no doubt that it is at least partly correct. The pattern of the Gyan-ratanāvalī does indeed follow that of Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1 and the individual pauxīs of the Vār are quoted in appropriate places. There are, however, reasons for questioning the traditional authorship of the work.

¹GR, pp.3-4.

²Ibid., sākhī 225, p.592.

In the first place there is the significant anachronism in the introductory sākhi which has already been noted in connection with the Miharbān Janam-sākhi and which calls in question the reliability of at least this portion of the Gyān-ratanāvalī.¹ Secondly, there is the fact that the writer of the Gyān-ratanāvalī refers to Manī Singh's janam-sākhi in one place as something distinct from his own product. In the introductory sākhi and at various points in the narrative² he makes references which suggest that he is intended to be understood as one who was present while Manī Singh was relating his account. At the very end there is the statement that Manī Singh took his janam-sākhi to Gurū Gobind Singh for approval and the obvious inference appears to be that the writer's own record is distinct from the one which he claims was presented to the Gurū.

Thirdly, there is the evident lack of homogeneity in the work. Much of it is consistent and follows a relatively logical chronological pattern, but there are three groups of sākhis and a number of individual ones which disrupt the pattern and which have obviously been drawn from extraneous sources. Some of this later material appears to be the result of simple interpolation, but

¹See supra pp. 104-5.

²E.g. GR, pp. 340, 516.

most of it has been properly integrated into the janam-sākhī.

Fourthly, there is the comparative modernity of the Gyan-ratanavali's language. In the case of the printed editions of the Bhai Bala tradition the same feature is to some extent a result of revision by the printers. This may also have occurred in the case of the Gyan-ratanavali, but as with the Bhai Bala editions it can be no more than a partial explanation. Gurmukh Singh, writing in 1885, referred to it in his list of extant janam-sākhīs as follows:

Bhai Mani Singh's (janam-sākhī): This janam-sākhī is popularly attributed to Bhai Mani Singh, although somebody else wrote it because its language is modern. And if Bhai Mani Singh himself wrote a janam-sākhī it is no longer extant.¹

It appears that the work had not been printed by then, and even if it had been Gurmukh Singh would certainly have been basing his description on one or more manuscript copies.

Fifthly, there has always been a temptation to associate such works with the name of a famous person. It seems clear that at least one other work, a commentary on the Japji, has been spuriously attributed to Mani Singh and the same might well have happened in the case of this janam-sākhī.

¹Introduction to Macauliffe's edition of the Hafizabad JS, pp.2-3.

These arguments do not, however, prove that the whole work must post-date the period of Bhāī Manī Singh. On the contrary it is entirely possible that portions of it which have subsequently been revised do in fact date back to the early eighteenth century. The conclusions indicated by these five points are that the ascription of the Gyāneratanāvalī to Bhāī Manī Singh is open to some considerable doubt, and that the janam-sākhī in its present form must certainly be the product of a later period. The problem which now emerges is that of distinguishing the earlier from the later material.

As far as content is concerned the claim which the janam-sākhī makes to be based upon Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1 is, as we have already observed, sustained by the actual quotation of the Vār's individual paūrīs in appropriate places, but it is substantially qualified by the fact that the great bulk of the material, including much that is basic, has been drawn from other sources. This is inevitably the case, for the Vār could provide only the narrowest of bases. The testimony of the janam-sākhī itself is that this supplementary material represents the oral traditions which circulated in the court of Gurū Gobind Singh. The passage which makes this claim is one of the suspect portions of the work¹

¹See supra pp.104-5, 156-7.

and the reference to the tenth Gurū's court must accordingly be regarded with some doubt, but there is every likelihood that the janam-sākhī in naming oral tradition as its source is making a truthful claim. Several of the sākhīs are also included in both the Purātan and Bhāī Bālā versions¹ and just as these two versions differ in their presentation, so the Gyān-ratanāvalī account differs from both. Several are to be found in the Miharbān Janam-sākhī as well² and in these instances all four versions offer varying accounts. These differences which distinguish individual sākhīs from corresponding accounts in other known collections indicate an independent selection from the common stock of oral sākhīs.

This conclusion cannot, however, be applied to the whole janam-sākhī. At this point it is necessary to divide the Gyān-ratanāvalī into two distinct parts and to except much of the second part from any claim to be based upon independent oral tradition. One group of sākhīs in the second half of the work has obviously been copied directly from a late Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī and two other groups, if not actually copies of another written version, are at least borrowings from the Bhāī Bālā tradition. The first half also contains individual sākhīs which have been taken from the same source.

¹See infra pp. 279-88.

²Most of these concern his early years (see infra pp. 279-80). The only one common to all four in the period following Guru Nanak's departure from Sultanpur is Sajjan thag dī sākhī. (Mih JS, pp. 235-8; Pur JS, pp. 21-22; BB JS, pp. 290-4; GR, pp. 207-10.) The Bhāī Bālā printed edition of 1871 (the BB JS) does, like the other three versions, include a Kaliyug sākhī, but it is a borrowing from the Purātan tradition.

At first sight the Gyaṇ-ratanāvalī seems to owe its first half (the portion dealing with Gurū Nānak's early life and most of the first udāsī) to the Purātan tradition, and its second half (the conclusion of the first udāsī and subsequent travels) to that of the Bhaī Bālā version. The second of these impressions is substantially correct, but not the first, in spite of the fact that the first half of the janam-sākhī has features which have normally been associated with the Purātan tradition. There is an ordered sequence of events, there are many sākhīs which are also to be found in the Purātan janam-sākhīs, the date of birth it gives is the same as that recorded in the Purātan versions,¹ Gurū Nānak's marriage is recorded before his departure from Talvaṇḍī for Sultānpur,² and there is no mention of Bhaī Bālā as his companion. A closer examination shows, however, that the first half is, for the most part, an independent collection. At certain points it is unquestionably closer to the Purātan tradition than to any other,³ but at others the affinities appear to be

¹In the month of Vaisākh, S.1526, as opposed to the Bhaī Bālā dating Kārtik Pūranmāsī, S.1526. The day of the month given for Gurū Nānak's death at the end of the JS also agrees with the Purātan tradition, i.e. Asū sudī 10 as opposed to the Bhaī Bālā Asū vadi 10. The year it gives, however, agrees with the Bhaī Bālā tradition (S.1596), not the Purātan tradition (S.1595). See infra pp.321-2, 333.

²Pur JS, sākhī 3, p.6. GR, sākhī 50, p.112.

³GR sākhī 52, Mansukh, pp. 113-16

" 65, Sheikh Sharaf, pp. 186-7.

" 66-68, Delhi: the resurrected elephant, pp. 187-93

" 82, Mansukh and Śivanābh, pp. 224-5.

with the Miharbān or Bhāi Bālā versions.

A sākhi which well illustrates both the inter-related character of the different versions and their divergences is the Triā rāj dī sākhi, the incident in which Gurū Nānak triumphs over magic and seduction in a land ruled by women.¹ Miharbān significantly omits this story, but the versions of the other three traditions and that of the India Office Library manuscript B40 provide examples of both similarities and disagreement.

All versions agree that Mardānā at this point went ahead of the Gurū and was changed into a sheep by one or more enchantresses. In the case of the Purātan and Bhāi Bālā versions the distinctive link is the fact that both set the incident in a land called Kaurū.² Beyond this, however, they diverge radically. The Bhāi Bālā version is, for once, much simpler and briefer, though scarcely more rational.

(cont.) See infra pp.280-1, numbers 18, 30, 32, and 19. These sākhis are not, however, copies of the Purātan versions. Sākhi 52, in particular, offers some interesting divergences both in chronological placing and in the names of the principal characters.

¹Pur JS, sākhi 23, pp.33-37. IO Library Ms Panj. B41 (Bhāi Bālā tradition), folios 70b-71b. GR, sākhi 84, pp.227-30. IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folios 83 ff. In the case of the Bhāi Bālā version reference is made to the B41 Ms as the printed edition (BB JS, sākhi 25, pp. 102-8) here follows the Purātan version. See supra p.135. For the B40 Ms see supra pp.94-7.

²Pur JS, p.33. IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 70b. The Bhāi Bālā printed edition (BB JS, p.102) gives the name as Kaurū and all subsequent editions follow this spelling.

There is no reference to a queen called Nūr Shāh,¹ and the miracles described differ from those of the Purātan account. According to the Bhāī Bālā story two women who seek to seduce the Gurū are changed, one into a ewe and the other into a bitch.²

As far as the general character of its version is concerned the Gyan-ratanāvalī sakhī resembles the Bhāī Bālā version, for it too is relatively brief and simple. It also agrees with the Bhāī Bālā account in having Mardānā changed into a chhatra (ram) instead of a medhā (lamb) as in the Purātan janam-sākhīs. The one other miracle it does mention is, however, to be found in the Purātan version and not that of the Bhāī Bālā manuscripts. Gurū Nānak, it records, caused a pot to adhere to the head of the woman who had enchanted Mardānā. It disagrees with both of the other versions in that it sets the story in "the south country", immediately prior to the crossing to Ceylon.

In this latter respect its nearest relation appears to be the India Office Library manuscript B40. This manuscript is, as we have already noted, similar to the Purātan janam-sākhīs in its early

¹Pur JS, p.34.

²IC Library Ms Panj B41, folio 71a.

stages, but most of the sākhīs which follow Gurū Nānak's departure from Sultānpur are completely independent of them. Its version of the Triā rāj dī sākhī is one such independent sākhī. The location it gives for the incident is an unspecified one "beside the sea". It too is a brief account with no queen in evidence and, unlike the Gyān-ratanāvalī version, no adhesive pot.

This combination of resemblance and divergence is characteristic of most of the first half of the Gyān-ratanāvalī¹ and it seems clear that the sākhīs in which it is to be found constitute a collection independent of the other three janam-sākhī traditions. There are, however, a number of exceptions. The following sākhīs have obviously been introduced at a much later date. With the exception of the second of them, sākhī 62, all appear in the expanded 1871 edition as late additions to the Bhāī Bālā tradition. Sākhī 62 appears in the Bhāī Bālā manuscript B41, but with marked differences.

Bābā Nānak recites the Sapat Slokī Gītā

Bābā Nānak cooks flesh at Kurukshetra

Mount Govardhan

¹For another illustration see infra pp.378-9.GR, sākhī 81, pp. 221-4, the meeting with Kaliyug, is another example. Sākhīs 161-3, pp. 426-33, the visit to Baghdād, are an illustration both of the GR's relation to Bhāī Gurdas's Var 1 and of its independence of the other JS traditions.

Babā Nānak visits Ayodhya

Babā Nānak visits Gayā

The wolf refuses a corpse

The girl transmuted into a boy¹

These have apparently been taken from a late Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhi. In one case, the Gayā sākhi, the omission of Bhāī Bālā's name has left an obvious hiatus, but for the most part the sakhis have been successfully woven into the narrative. One other story which may be a subsequent introduction is that of the Yogi of Jāpāpaṭan.² Some of the details of this incident have obviously been taken from the Hakikat Rāh.³ Substantial portions of the lengthy and somewhat confused record of a miraculous journey to Pāk Paṭṭan and a sudden return to Talvaṇḍī which runs through from sākhi 36 to sākhi 40 must also be later additions.⁴

¹The page references for these seven sakhis are as follows:
GR: pp. 46-48, 135, 194-200, 213, 214, 220-1, and 237-42.
Bhāī Bālā expanded 1871 edition, Divān Bujā Singh, Lahore:
pp. 10-11, 534, 537-9, 541-2, 539, 499, 363-6.

²GR, sākhis 85-6, pp. 230-2.

³See Appendix 3, pp. 635-6.

⁴GR, pp. 60-98.

During this first half of the janam-sākhī events have, on the whole, been moving in a logical sequence without any mention of Bhāī Bālā. It is Bālā's appearance which marks the end of this first and much more satisfactory half of the Gyān-ratanāvalī. Bhāī Bālā's abrupt entry into the story occurs in the middle of the group of sākhīs which describe Gurū Nānak's meeting with Sālas Rāi, a jeweller of Biṣambarpur.¹ There is an obvious break in the janam-sākhī at this point. In the preceding sākhīs Gurū Nānak and Mardānā are to be found moving up the west of India towards Bikaner and there appears to be no such place as Biṣambarpur which they could have passed through during this period of their travels. A later tradition regards it as a version of Bishnupur, the ancient town in Baṅkurā District, Bengāl.² In this case the appropriate place for the incident would have been between sākhīs 77 and 78 which are set in Paṭṇā and Jagannāth Puri respectively. The incident is one which is to be found in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs,³ but not in either the Purātan or Miharbān version. The account in the printed edition of the Gyān-ratanāvalī is, in fact, an almost exact copy of the account printed

¹GR, sākhīs 99-107, pp. 247-59.

²MK, p.140.

³BB JS, sākhī 31, pp. 127-37.

in the expanded 1871 version of the Bhāi Bālā tradition.¹

Following the Sālas Rāi meeting there is a brief return to the previous pattern, and indeed much of the second half of the janam-sākhi is a continuation of this same pattern. It contains, however, two large groups of sākhis which have obviously been taken directly from a Bhāi Bālā collection and the Sālas Rāi sākhis may be regarded as a third such group. The first of the large groups begins with sākhi 110² which relates that when Gurū Nānak and Mardānā returned from the first udāsī Mardānā entered Talvaṇḍī alone while his master remained out in the jungle. Hearing of Mardānā's arrival, Kālū went to him and asked where Nānak was. Mardānā replied that Gurū Nānak had returned to his home country, but that his precise whereabouts were not known. They would soon know, however, for Bālā Sandhū would come bringing news of him.³ Bhāi Bālā has made his second abrupt entry and from that point he is a constant companion until sākhi 151⁴ where he disappears again. From sākhi 110 the logical pattern continues for a time, although the content is Bhāi Bālā material,⁵ but from sākhi 120⁶

¹Divān Būṭā Singh, Lahore, sākhis 74-75, pp. 183-93.

²GR, p.263.

³GR, p.264.

⁴The building of Kartārpur, GR, p.401.

⁵E.g. Shāh Vālī of Qandhār, GR, pp. 281-2. Abdul Rahamān, GR, p.284.

⁶GR, p.285.

onwards the record loses its coherence and after traversing the Bhāī Bālā series of Purāṇic khaṇḍs the travellers are suddenly back in Rāmeshwaram where they board the famous fish of the Bhāī Bālā tradition and travel on its back to Ceylon.¹

This section has obviously been taken from a Bhāī Bālā source, but it is not, as in the case of the Sālas Rāi sākhis, a case of simply **extracting** material and inserting it in the Gyān-ratanāvalī without any significant modification. The material has been incorporated in such a way as to harmonise it with the janam-sākhi's claim to be based upon Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1. By sākhi 139 Gurū Nānak, Mardānā, and Bhāī Bālā have reached the approaches to Mount Sumeru and at this point paurīs 28-31 of the Vār must be introduced if the Gyān-ratanāvalī is to remain true to its declared basis. There is no sudden interruption at this point. At the conclusion of sākhi 139 Gurū Nānak tells Mardānā and Bhāī Bālā to proceed no further "because the summit of this mountain is dazzling as a result of the jewels gathered there....."²

¹The GR fish measures 25 jojans long by 1 jojan wide, and is represented as a "Sikh" who had earned his fate through disobedience to King Janak. GR, pp. 315-7. A jojan is variously computed as four, eight, or sixteen miles. For the Bhāī Bālā version see supra p.132.

²'Tān Bābe kahiā he Bhāī Bālā ate Maradānā tusīn ethe raho kyon jo eh parabat dā siṅg manīān saṅjugat baḍā ujalā hai.....' GR, p.328.

He then leaves them and engages in a lengthy discourse with the Siddhs. Paurīs 28-30 are quoted on pages 337-8 and paurī 31 on page 340. The discourse concludes with a lengthy exposition of the Japjī.¹ At its conclusion Gurū Nānak does not immediately return to his companions, but first visits Dattātreyā on Mount Biār,² Prahlād on Mount Alalachīn,³ and Dhrū at the entrance to Baikunth.⁴ All of this is Bhāī Bālā material. In this manner Bhāī Gurdās's account of the Mount Sumeru incident and three distinctive Bhāī Bālā sakhīs have been woven into a single episode involving Gurū Nānak in a brief journey without his companions.

With the disappearance of Bhāī Bālā the record reverts to the pattern of the first half of the janam-sakhī, but retains a much stronger Bhāī Bālā flavour. On page 516 Bhāī Bālā makes another abrupt entry and again the story loses its coherence. A miscellaneous collection of sakhīs follows and order is not restored until page 572 when with the death of Mardānā the account enters its concluding phase.

¹GR, pp. 340-90.

²GR, p.390.

³GR, p.391.

⁴GR, p.392.

The second half of the janam-sākhī is accordingly an amalgam. Some of it continues the earlier pattern of an independent selection from the current stock, presented in a logical sequence, and the remainder is evidently material subsequently introduced from Bhāī Bālā sources. This means that we have in the Gyan-ratanāvalī two contrasting elements. The first half (with the evident exception of the introductory sākhī and a number of other individual sākhīs) represents an independent selection from the common stock of sākhīs, and the second combines this first element with substantial borrowings from the Bhāī Bālā tradition. With the exception of the Sālas Rāi sākhīs and a few minor points both elements have been integrated into a single janam-sākhī by an editor who provided an introduction and a conclusion, and who refers to Manī Singh in the third person. The language of the janam-sākhī and its relationship to the Bhāī Bālā tradition suggest that this was probably done in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, although some individual sākhīs must have been added later. The first element representing the independent selection would, however, be older and may possibly go back as far as the time of Gurū Gobind Singh.

The value of the Gyan-ratanāvalī lies chiefly in this first element and as far as this material is concerned the janam-sākhī is a rather more satisfactory collection than those of the Bhāī Bālā

group. It has an order which the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs lack, it avoids many of their errors, and it offers appreciably less that is plainly fantastic. In spite of this, however, its usefulness is not much greater as far as efforts to reconstruct Guru Nānak's biography are concerned. It does at times have a negative value in that its variant account will strengthen a case against the historicity of a particular incident recorded in the older janam-sākhīs, and at a very few points, such as the date of birth question, it makes a positive contribution of some significance. Insofar as it adds to what Bhāi Gurdās's Vār 1 contains it represents a relatively late selection from the fund of oral sākhīs, interesting for this reason and sober by comparison with the Bhāi Bālā presentation, but still a supplementary source of only occasional usefulness.

The Mahimā Prakāś

Two works which were not available to the writer but which deserve mention are the two versions of Mahimā Prakāś, both of which are still in manuscript form. The earlier of the two, Mahimā Prakāś Vāratak, is said to have been written in S. 1798 (AD 1741) by Bawā Kirpāl Singh Bhallā,¹ and the later, longer version, Mahimā Prakāś

¹ MK Addendum, p.84 (note 5 of p.701).

Kavitā, in S.1833 (AD 1776) by Sarūp Dās Bhallā, a descendant of Gurū Amar Dās.¹

The Sikh History Department of Khalsa College, Amritsar, possesses manuscript copies of both. Professor Kirpāl Singh, Director of the Department, reports that the two accounts are basically the same, but that the prose version, Mahimā Prakāś Varatak, is appreciably shorter, having only twenty sākhīs as opposed to sixty-five in the metrical version. The sākhīs are generally in the same order and most of those which appear only in the Kavitā incorporate lengthy discourses. Several, in the manner of so many of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī gōsts, mention no incident at all. Sarūp Dās has, like Miharbān, appended an explanation to each pad quoted, but unlike him he gives only a paraphrase and not an interpretation.²

According to Kanh Singh the Kavitā comprises a janam-sākhī of Gurū Nānak, followed by a brief but connected sketch of the lives of the other nine Gurūs.³ It is said to be in the Purātan

¹The poem itself gives this date:
Dasa asta sahasa samata vikrama,
Avara adhika tetisa;
Sarūpadāsa Satiguru karī,
Mahimāprakāsa bakhasīs.

MK, p.701.

²Mih JS, Introductory Essays, pp. 83-4. An example of this style is given by Kirpāl Singh on p.84.

³MK, p.701.

tradition and gives the dates of Gurū Nānak's birth and death as Vaisākh sudī 3 and Asū sudī 10 respectively.¹ Kānh Singh does not give the year which it specifies in the latter case, but a note by Vīr Singh indicates that in the Vāratak at least the year must be S.1596 (AD 1539).² Like the Gyān-ratanāvalī it is too recent to be regarded as a primary source, but it is doubtless interesting as an example of the continuing Purātan tradition. The Department of Languages, Paṭiālā, proposes to print the Kavitā in the near future.³

¹MK, p.701.

²See infra p.325, n.1.

³Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh, Patiala, to the writer, 23.6.64.

THE LIFE OF GURŪ NĀNAK

The Life of Gurū Nānak according to Bhāī Gurdās

Bhāī Gurdās's account of the life of Gurū Nānak is to be found in paurīs 23-45 of his first Vār, and in paurīs 13-14 of his eleventh Vār he gives his list of the Gurū's more important followers. The following is a translation of these two groups of paurīs.¹

Vār 1

23 Hearing (mankind's) cry the Beneficent Lord sent
 Gurū Nānak into the world.

 Performing the (humble) service of washing feet he
 provided charaṇāmrit² for the Sikhs to drink.³

 (Gurū Nānak) revealed (amidst the multitude of deities
 of) the Kaliyug⁴ that there is but One, the supreme
 God.

¹The translation is a free one. Brackets indicate words which do not occur in the text of the Vārs, but which have been inserted to give the translation continuity. The Pañjābī paraphrase given in Hazārā Singh's edition of the Vārs has been used extensively in preparing this translation.

²The water in which the feet of a gurū or other person of acknowledged spiritual stature have been washed. The usage here is metaphorical.

³I.e. He set them an example of humble adoration.

⁴The fourth and last of the cosmic ages.

(He made firm) the bases of the four pillars¹ of dharam and caused the four castes to be one.

He regarded king and beggar as equal and caused the virtue of humility to be practised in the world.

Behold the manner in which God reverses accepted orders, how He causes heads (which are held high) to bow to the feet.

Bābā (Nānak) caused (the people of) Kaliyug to cross (the Ocean of Existence); he proclaimed the mantar of Sati Nam.

Gurū Nānak came for the redemption of (the people of) Kaliyug.

24 First Bābā (Nānak) received grace at the court (of God) and then afterwards (went forth) to labour.

His food was sand and the ak tree,² and his bed he spread on stones.

He underwent great austerities and God was pleased with his labours.

In Sach Khand Bābā (Nānak) was robed with honour, and received the nine treasures of the Nam and humility.

Bābā (Nānak) meditated and looking forth beheld the whole world in flames.

Without the Gurū there was darkness and there could be heard (the sound of) the people's lamentations.

Bābā (Nānak) assumed human form and lived the life of a faqīr.

¹Literally the plinths or bases of pillars.

²It is poisonous.

He came to amend (the pattern of life of) the people of the world.

- 25 Bābā (Nānak) visited the tīraths; he went round seeing them all on festival days.

Many people were performing the rites of the old religion, but being devoid of loving adoration these earned them no merit.

(It seemed as if) God had never prescribed love for he saw (the paṇḍits absorbed in such external practices as) the reading of the four Veds and the Smṛitis.

He searched the whole earth (and reflected upon the conditions of) the Satyayug, the Dvāparayug, and the Tretāyug.¹

In Kaliyug there was darkness and many kinds of false illusion had led (the people) into error.

The Lord is not found by means of (these) false appearances, (but if) Self be purged (then) no trace (of such illusions remains).

No matter what his caste may be, he who follows the the Gurū must tread a lowly path (for such humility) is the particular quality of the Gurū's Sikh.

In this manner the record (in his account book) will win approval in the (divine) court.

- 26 (Gurū Nānak observed) ascetics, devotees seeking salvation through charitable gifts, chirajivins,² men undergoing severe austerities, siddhs, naths, gurus and disciples.

¹The first three of the four cosmic ages.

²For the untranslated words in this paūrī see the Glossary.

Many and varied goddesses, gods, perfected risīs,
Śaivite deities (such as) Kṣetrapāl (were being
worshipped).

The hosts (of Śiv), gandharavs, apsarasas, kinnars,
yakṣas, and magicians of various kinds,

Lakhs of savages, dānavs, and dāityas (he saw) suffering
(as a result of entanglement) in māyā.

All were ensnared in haumai. Gurūs with multitudes of
their disciples had sunk (in the Ocean of Existence).

During his round of the tīraths and melās he searched
but saw no gurmukh.

Hindus and Turks, he saw them all - pīrs, prophets,
and many different communities.

The blind were thrusting the blind into a well.

27 (When) Satgurū Nānak appeared darkness was dispelled
and light shone forth;

Just as when the sun rises the stars are hidden and
darkness flees away;

(Just as) at the lion's roar a herd of deer takes
instant flight.

Centres of worship were established wherever Bābā
(Nānak) set foot.

All the Siddh centres in the world became centres of
(Gurū) Nānak's teaching.

In every house a dharmasālā was established and kīrtan
was sung (as if it were) an unending Baisākhi
festival.

In all directions Bābā (Nānak) imparted salvation;
truth prevailed throughout the nine regions of
the earth.

The supreme Gurū was made manifest in the Kaliyug.

- 28 Bābā (Nānak) viewed the utmost extremities of the nine regions of the earth.

He then ascended Mount Sumeru where a company of Siddhs came into view.

The eighty-four Siddhs, Gorakh(nāth) and the others, (were there and seeing him) they wondered in their minds.

The Siddhs asked (him), 'Hear us, youth! What power brought you here?'

(The Gurū replied), 'I repeated (the Nām of) God and so became imbued with prem-bhakti.'

The Siddhs said, 'Listen youth! Tell us your name.'

Bābā (Nānak) replied, 'Nāth-jī, my name is Nānak and by repeating (the Nām of God) I have obtained salvation.

(Thus) is he who is regarded as low raised to the highest rank.'

- 29 The Siddhs then asked, 'Nānak, what is happening in the world below?'

(From his answer) all the Siddhs perceived that for the salvation (of the people) of Kaliyug the coming¹ of Nānak was essential.

Bābā (Nānak) replied, 'Nāth-jī, truth is the moon and falsehood is darkness.

Darkness prevails as on a moonless night and I have come into the world to search for the truth.

Sin has enslaved the world and (Dharam), the bull, standing beneath the earth cries out.

¹Avatār.

The Siddhs sit silent in the mountains; who then
will save the world?

The yogīs (who wander on the earth below) are devoid
of knowledge. Day and night they plaster their
limbs with ashes and do nothing else.

Without the Gurū the whole world has sunk (in the
Ocean of Existence).

- 30 'Masters, the Kaliyug is the vomit of a dog which has
as its food the flesh of corpses.

Kings commit sinful deeds and guardians¹ consume the
crops which they were meant to protect.

Devoid of knowledge, the people have become blind
and utter evil and falsehood.

Brothers, the disciples play musical instruments and
the gurū dances in all manner of ways.

Servants remain seated in their houses and the gurū
arises and goes to their houses.

The gāzīs have become corrupt, taking bribes and ig-
noring the rights (of the people).

Women's love for men is only for their money, regard-
less of its source.

Sin prevails throughout the world.'

- 31 The Siddhs wondered how they might bring this young
man into their order,

(For they appreciated that) such a yogī would impart
enlightenment to their sect in this Kali age.

¹Literally: the fences.

A Nāth gave him a begging bowl and arising he went off to fill it with water.

When Bābā (Nānak) reached the water he saw jewels, precious stones, rubies.

The Satgurū is the being beyond human understanding; who can endure the Guru's radiance!

The Gurū returned (and said), 'Nāth-jī, at that place there is no water in the lake.'

By means of the Śabad he overcame the assembly of Siddhs, distinguishing his way from theirs.

In the Kaliyug (Gurū) Nānak (imparted) the Nām which brings peace.

32 Bābā (Nānak) then proceeded to Mecca wearing blue garments as God wears flowers.¹

He carried a staff in his hand, a book under his arm, a water pot, and a prayer-mat (for giving) the call to prayer.

He went and sat in a mosque where hajīs² assembled.

When he went to sleep at night he did so with his feet pointing towards the miharāb.³

Jīvan kicked him (and said), 'What godless infidel (is this) sleeping (here)?'

He has his legs pointing towards God. Why has he so perversely lain down (in this way)?'

¹The point of banavārī, an epithet of Viṣṇu, is not clear in this context.

²Pilgrims to Meccā.

³The niche in a mosque which indicates the direction of the Ka'bah.

(When he) seized (Nānak's) legs and dragged them round,
Mecca also moved round, thus revealing (the Gurū's)
power.

All were astounded and began saluting him.

- 33 The qāzīs and mullāhs gathered and began questioning
him on religious matters.

God has unfolded an immense creation; none can com-
prehend His power.

Opening their books they asked, 'Which is the greater
(religion) - the Hindu or the Muslim?'

Bābā (Nānak) answered the hajīs 'Without good deeds
both lead only to suffering.¹

Neither Hindu nor Muslim finds refuge in (God's) court.²

The safflower's pigment is not fast; it runs when
washed in water.

People are jealous of each other, but Rām and Rahīm³
are one.

The world has taken the devil's path.'

- 34 In Mecca he won adoration and left his sandals as a
relic.⁴

Wherever he went in the world Bābā (Nānak imparted
salvation); no place remained devoid (of his
message).

¹Literally: both weep.

²I.e. if they insist upon religious exclusiveness.

³The Hindu and Muslim names for God.

⁴The sandals are said to be preserved in Udh, District Bahāwalpur.
The story of their preservation comes, however, from the Nānak
Prakāś. Hazārā Singh and Vir Singh, Varān Bhāi Gurdās, p.30 n. *.

In every home (people) adored Bābā (Nānak), casting
away their Hindu and Muslim (sectarian notions).

When the sun rose, flooding the world with light,
nothing that was hidden remained unrevealed.

When the lion roared in the wilderness the whole
herd of deer took flight.

When the moon is high it cannot be hidden by holding
up a pan.¹

From farthest east to furthest west the nine regions
of the whole world bowed (before him).

For such was the power he wielded in the world.

35 Bābā (Nānak) then proceeded to Baghdād and going
outside (the city) he set up camp.

(There were two people), one Bābā (Nānak), the image
of the Timeless One, and the other Mardānā, the
rabābī.²

(Bābā Nānak) uttered the call to prayer and the whole
world fell silent.

The city (of Baghdād) also fell silent and observing
this the pir was astounded.

When he looked closely he perceived a faqīr (absorbed)
in a deep trance.

Dastgīr (the pir) then asked, 'What faqīr are you and
to what order do you belong?'

(Mardānā replied, 'He is) Nānak and he has come into
this Kali age. He is a faqīr of God³ and he has
attained to a knowledge of the One.

¹Kunālī, an earthenware pan or basin in which flour is kneaded.

²One who plays the stringed instrument called a rabāb.

³Rabu fakīru. There is a variant radu fakīru, in which case the
meaning would probably be: He is a faqīr who has rejected (all
such symbols as dress and equipment).

He is known on the earth, in heaven, in all directions.

- 36 The pīr disputed with him and asked question. (He realised) that this faqīr possessed great authority.

He has worked a great miracle here in Baghdād.

(He says that) there are lākhs of nether worlds and heavens; this is wondrous news that he has declared.

Dastgīr then spoke again: 'Grant that we too may witness what you have discovered.'

(Bābā Nanak) took the pīr's son and closing his eyes he ascended (with him) into the air.

In the twinkling of an eye he revealed all of the lākhs of heavens and lākhs of underworlds.

Filling a bowl with karāh prasād¹ he brought it from the nether regions.

A manifest authority is not hidden and cannot be hidden.

- 37 Having subdued the fortress of Baghdād he overcame all in Meccā and Medīnā.

He triumphed over the assembly of the eighty-four Siddhs and over the deceits of the six systems.²

Myriads of underworlds and heavens were conquered by him and on earth he overcame the whole world.

He triumphed over the nine regions of the earth and disseminated the Sati Nam.

¹The sacramental food of the Sikhs. See Jogendra Singh, Sikh Ceremonies, pp. 95-6.

²The six systems of Hindu philosophy.

Gods and dānavs, savages and daityas, Chitr and Gupt -
all fell at his feet.

Before the throne of Indra apsarasas sang his praises in
all modes.

Throughout the world this joyful message went forth that
Gurū Nānak has come for the salvation (of the people)
of the Kaliyug.

Hindus and Muslims (both) bowed (before him).

38 Bābā (Nānak) then proceeded to Kartārpur and removed
the garments he had worn during his wanderings.

He put on ordinary clothes, ascended his gaddī,¹ and
thus appeared (before his people).

He reversed his earlier way of life and he set his seal
on Gurū Aṅgad (as his successor).

(For) his sons did not obey him, (becoming instead)
perfidious rebels and leaving him.

He made divine utterances, so bringing light and
driving away darkness.

(He imparted) wisdom through discourses and conversation;
the anahad śabad² resounded endlessly.

The Sodarū³ and Āratī⁴ were sung and in the early morning
the Japjī was recited.

¹Cushion or throne. In this context it indicates a seat of spiritual authority.

²See infra p. 490.

³Rāg Āsā, AG pp. 8-9 and p.347. It is a part of the Raharās, the Sikh evening prayer, and is also found, with minor variations, in the Japjī (paurī 27).

⁴Possibly Dhanāsarī 9, AG pp. 13 and 663, but more likely the three śabads which are collectively entitled Āratī Sohilā (AG pp. 12-13), the third of which is Dhanāsarī 9.

Those who followed him cast off the burden of the
Atharav Ved.¹

- 39 Hearing of the Śivarāt mela² Bābā (Nānak) proceeded to
Achal Baṭālā.³

In order to see him all the people turned away (from
the yogīs).

Money began to fall like rain; offerings came in
increasing quantities.

Observing this the yogīs became exceedingly jealous.

(Some) bhagats had come and performed the rās; the
yogīs took their loṭā and hid it.

Forgetting their rās the bhagats were concerned only
for their loṭā.

Bābā (Nānak), being a person endued with all knowledge,
drew out the loṭā from where it was hidden.

Seeing this the yogīs were filled with enmity.

- 40 Filled with envy all the yogīs rose up to hold
discourse with him.

The yogī Bhaṅgaranāth asked him, 'Why have you put
kañjī⁴ in milk?

¹I.e. they put their trust in the Gurū's teaching.

²A Śaivite festival held on the fourteenth day of the dark half
of Phagup (February-March). Macauliffe i.157 n.1. MK gives
contradictory dates - the fourteenth sudī on p.33 and the fourt-
eenth vadi on p.151.

³Four miles south of Baṭālā in Gurdāspur District.

⁴An acidic liquid prepared by fermenting a mixture of mustard,
salt, and ginger in water or buttermilk. It is believed to be
beneficial to the digestion and the liver. MK 237.

The milk container has been ruined and churning
produces no butter.

Why have you put aside the ascetic's robe and adopted
the ways of the world?'¹

Nānak said, 'Bhaṅgaranāth, your mother was a foolish
woman.

She did not know how to cleanse the container and
through (her) foolishness the milk has been burnt.

You become an ascetic, separating yourself from house-
holders, and then you go and beg at their houses.

He who does not give receives nothing.'

41 Hearing these words the yogīs rushed on him, assuming
many forms.

(They said), 'Nānak Bedī has come into the Kaliyug and
denied the six systems.'

The Siddhs pronounced all their spells, uttering charms
and incantations.

The yogīs changed into lions and wolves, and worked
many wonders.

One yogī took wing and flew like a playful bird;

One became a snake and began to hiss; another caused
fire to rain down.

Bhaṅgaranāth practised sleight of hand; another sat on
a deerskin and floated on water.

The Siddhs' fire was extinguished and yet burnt.

¹I.e. You have mixed the kañjī of worldly affections into the milk
of detachment. As a result you have corrupted your man and no effort
will produce the butter of jñan.

- 42 The Siddhs (then challenged him) saying, 'Hear us, Nanak! What miracles have you performed before the world?

Why have you been so dilatory? Show us something.'

Bābā (Nānak) replied, 'Nath-jī, in my view a yogī is worthless.

Apart from the Gurū, the saṅgat, and the bānī any other refuge is of less value than a mustard seed.

He who manifested Himself in the form of Śiv, the immutable Creator - He it is who set the world in motion.'

The Siddhs with their charms and incantations were overcome. The Guru's Śabad defeated their (magical) arts.

(The letter) dadā (signifies) the Giver, (He who is) the Gurū; (and the letter) kakā (signifies His) worth, which no one has ever comprehended.¹

(The Siddhs) became humble and submitted to Nānak, the Satguru.

- 43 Bābā (Nānak) said, 'Nath-jī, listen to what I say for I speak the truth.

Apart from (the miracle of) the true Nām I work no wonder.

Were I to put on clothes of fire or build a dwelling of Himalayan snow;²

¹For the Nāths the letters dadā and kakā possessed a mystical quality signifying din (or the path of yoga) and karamāt (miracles). Guru Nānak reinterpreted them, according to this account, to signify dātā (the Giver) and kīmat (value, worth). Hazārā Singh and Vīr Singh, Varān Bhaī Gurdas, pp. 37-8.

²Lines 3-8 are a paraphrase of Gurū Nānak's ślok 1 of paurī 19, Var Majh, AG p.147.

Were I to eat iron as my food or make myself master
of the whole earth;

Were I assume to such proportions that I could
bestride the whole world in a single step:

Were I to weigh earth and heaven with but a tiny
weight¹ in the other scale;

Were I to possess within myself such power that
whatever I said came to pass;

Without the Sati Nām (all would be but) the shadow
of a cloud.'

44 (And so) Bābā (Nānak) held his discourse with the Siddhs
and as a result of his words peace came upon them.

(Gurū Nānak) triumphed over the Śivarāt mela and
followers of the six systems came and did homage
to him.

The Siddhs made this auspicious pronouncement: 'Blessed
is Nanak and great are his works.

A great being has been made manifest and has caused light
to shine in this Kali age.'

Bābā (Nānak) arose and journeyed from the mela to Multān.

Before he arrived a pīr of Multān came bringing a cup
filled with milk.

Bābā (Nānak) picked a jasmin flower from a field and laid
it on the milk;

Just as the Ganges flows into the ocean.²

¹Tank: a weight equal to four māsās or one-third of a tolā. The
masa was a variable weight but usually equalled 17-18 grains Troy.

²Without making any evident difference to its volume.

45 After journeying to Multān (Gurū Nānak) returned to Kartārpur.

His glory daily increased; in the Kali age Nānak caused the Nām to be repeated.

To ask for anything other than the Nām is to bring suffering and calamity upon one's head.

He caused his writ to run throughout the world and inaugurated his holy brotherhood.¹

Before he died he appointed Lahipā and caused the Gurū's umbrella to wave over his head.²

Merging (his) light in (Gurū Aṅgad's) light,³ the Satgurū changed his form.

None could comprehend (this mystery); a wonder of wonders he revealed.

Changing his body he made (Gurū Aṅgad's) body his own.

Vār XI

13 (Gurū Nānak) delivered Tārū the Popaṭ⁴ who had been an ascetic since childhood.

He who is known as Mūlā the Kīr (became) a slave of the Gurū and won (the Gurū's) love by his wondrous deeds.⁵

¹Panth.

²The symbol of regnal authority.

³I.e. his spirit left his own body and entered that of Gurū Aṅgad.

⁴In many cases the disciple's sub-caste is given.

⁵Or perhaps: and performed wondrous deeds of love.

Pirthā and Kheḍā, the Soirī (khatrīs), took refuge
at (the Gurū's) feet and so dwelt in joy and peace.

Mardānā the Mirāsī played the rabāb melodiously in
(the Gurū's) assemblies.

Prithī Mal the Sahgal was a staunch bhagat; Rāmā the
ḍiḍī was a practiser of bhakti.

Daulat Khān Lodī, a loyal (disciple), became during
his lifetime a (true) pīr and so obtained immortality.¹

Mālo and Māṅgā were two Sikhs who found joy in their
love of the Gurū's utterances.

Meeting (the Gurū), Kālū put his trust (in him and by
his singing) of the Gurū's songs won praise in
the court (of God).

(All received) the Gurū's teaching and radiated loving
adoration.

- 14 Bhagat, an Oharī (khatrī) and a bhagat, and Jāpuvānsī
performed (devoted) service.

The Uppal (khatrī) known as Sīhān, and Gajaṇ, another
Uppal, pleased the Gurū.

Bhāgīrath of Mailasīhān (formerly) sang the praises
of Kālī.

Jittā Randhāvā the Bhallā and Būṛā Buḍhā were single-
minded in their meditation.

Phirapā the Khahirā, Jodh the Sikh, and Jīvāī served
the Gurū.....²

¹This tradition concerning Daulat Khān Lodī is at variance with the
reputation for duplicity and treachery which his involvement with
Bābur earned him. The reputation owes its origin, however, to Bābur's
Memoirs (see BN(B)ii.459) and the issue is one where impartiality is
hardly to be expected from the author. It is possible that the tradi-
tion recorded by Bhāī Gurdās reflects a fairer estimate of Daulat Khān's
character than the judgment of his enemy.

²The remainder of the paurī concerns followers of Gurū Aṅgad. Hazārā
Singh and Vīr Singh, op.cit., p.194.

The Life of Gurū Nānak according to the Purātan Janam-sākhī¹

- 1.1 Bābā Nānak was born in the month of Vaisākh, S. 1526 (AD 1469). The actual date is not specified, but the birth is said to have taken place on a moonlit night during the last watch before dawn. His father, Kālū, was a Bedī khatri who lived in the village of Rāi Bhoi dī Talvaṇḍī² and it was there that Nānak was born. His mother's name is not given. During his infancy he played with other children, but unlike them he had a concern for spiritual things and from the age of five began to utter mysterious sayings. The local Hindus declared that a god had been incarnated in human form and the Muslims that a true follower of God had been born.
- 2.1 When he turned seven Nānak was taken to a paṇḍit in order to learn how to read. After only one day he gave up reading and when the paṇḍit asked him why he had lapsed into silence Nānak instructed him at length in the vanity of worldly learning and the contrasting value of the Nām. The paṇḍit was greatly impressed and permitted him to return home.

¹The first of the figures in the margin indicates the number of each sākhī, and the second figure the page on which it begins in the fifth edition of Vīr Singh's Purātan Janam-sākhī. For a translation of the Colebrooke janam-sākhī see E. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, pp. vii-xlv.

²In the tahsil of Shekhupurā, Lahore District.

3.5 The child now began to manifest disturbing signs of withdrawal from the world. He was set to learning 'Turkī'¹ at the age of nine, but returned home and continued to sit in silence.² The local people suggested to Kālū that he should have Nānak married. Kālū took their advice, a betrothal was arranged at the house of Mūlā, a khatri of the Chopā sub-caste, and at the age of twelve Bābā Nānak was duly married. No reference is made to where Mūlā lived or to where the marriage took place, and nor is his wife's name given. Nānak now took up a worldly occupation, but his heart was not in it and he spent his time consorting with faqīrs.

4.6 Two miracles are related of this period. On one occasion he went to sleep while grazing the family buffaloes and the animals proceeded to ruin a wheat field. The aggrieved owner of the field haled the negligent Nānak before Rāi Bulār, the landlord of the village. Gurū Nānak insisted, however, that no damage had been done, and a

¹Persian.

²The India Office Library manuscript Panj. B40 inserts before the reference to Kālū's effort to have him taught 'Turkī' a very brief reference to his having been invested with the janeū at the age of nine: "Jab Bābā Nānaku barasā navān hoā tab jānu pāiā. Pher Torkī parāni pāiā." (Folio 6a).

messenger despatched by Rāi Bulār found that the ruined crop had been miraculously restored. Rāi Bulār's relationship to Rāi Bhoi is not specified. On another occasion Rāi Bulār happened upon Nānak sleeping under a tree and was greatly impressed to observe that the shadow of the tree did not move with the declining sun. The same sakhī also records the birth of Gurū Nānak's two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand.

6.8 Nānak's habitual withdrawal from the world continued to cause grave concern and both his parents remonstrated with him unsuccessfully. Some of the Bedīs suggested consulting a vaid, but this merely prompted utterances concerning the nature of what the Gurū regarded as the real illness afflicting mankind. The family's problem was eventually solved by Nānak's brother-in-law, Jai Rām,¹ who was the steward of Nawāb Daulat Khān of Sultānpur. Jai Rām sent a letter inviting Nānak to Sultānpur. The invitation was accepted and Gurū Nānak departed, comforting his forlorn wife with a promise that he would call her as soon as his work in

¹Gurū Nānak's sister is not named.

Sultānpur prospered.

9.13 As soon as Nānak arrived in Sultānpur Jai Rām petitioned Daulat Khān to grant his brother-in-law an audience. The request was granted and as a result of the interview Daulat Khān formed a very favourable impression of Nānak. He presented him with a robe of honour and issued instructions that he should be given employment. The nature of the employment is not specified beyond the fact that it was evidently understood to be clerical work. The sākhī records that each morning he would first take his orders from the court and then would "sit down to write".¹ In the following sākhī Daulat Khān refers to him as "a good vazīr" and uses the same word to describe him in sākhī 11.

During this period the Gurū lived a very simple life, keeping only enough of his food allowance to meet his own limited needs and devoting the remainder to God's work.² Mardānā the ḍūm came from Talvaḍḍī to join him and was followed by others. All were commended to Daulat Khān by Nānak and received employment as a result. The group regularly

¹Pur JS p.14.

²That is, giving it to sādhus and faqirs.

sang kīrtan until late into the night and during the last watch the Gurū would go to the river and bathe.

10.14 One day Nānak went to the river¹ and removing his clothes left them in the care of a servant. While he was bathing messengers of God came and he was transported by them to the divine court. There he was given a cup of amrit and with it came the command: "Nānak, this is the cup of My Nām. Drink it." This he did and was charged to go into the world and preach the Nām.²

Nānak, I am with you. I have blessed you and I have blessed all who will take your name. Go, repeat My Nām and cause the people to repeat it also. Remain unsullied by the world, remain (faithful) in the Nām, in charity, in pure living, in service, and in remembrance. I have imparted My Nām to you. Perform this work Nānak, he upon whom you look graciously, on him do I look graciously. Upon whom your grace rests, mine also rests. My name is Parabrahm Parameśvar and yours is Gurū Parameśvar.³

In the meantime the servant had become anxious at his master's failure to emerge from the water. He returned to the town and informed Daulat Khān of the apparent tragedy.

¹The name of the river is not given.

²For Nām see infra pp. 498 ff.

³Pur JS, pp. 14, 15.

Daulat Khān rode out at once and had the river dragged, but Nānak's body was not to be found.

Three days later, however, the missing Nānak suddenly reappeared at the point where he had entered the river. Daulat Khān joined the crowd which gathered, but Gurū Nānak evidently remained silent, for the people explained to the Nawāb that he had sustained injury in the river. Hearing this Daulat Khān departed with a heavy heart and Nānak, wearing only a langoṭī, went with Mardānā to live with some faqīrs.

11.16 For one day Gurū Nānak maintained his silence and then on the following day he spoke, saying, "There is neither Hīndū nor Musalmān". This was reported to Daulat Khān, but dismissed as the sort of utterance one might expect to hear from a faqīr. His qāzī, however, took a more serious view of what appeared to be a clear rejection of Islām's claims to superiority. Daulat Khān agreed to question Nānak on the subject, but found nothing offensive in the reply he received.

It so happened that the appointed time for the second daily prayer came while Gurū Nānak was being examined. Everyone present arose and went to the mosque, and Nānak went with

them. There he caused even greater offence to the qāzī by laughing out loud during the reading of namāz. The qāzī protested angrily to Daulat Khān, but Nānak explained that he had done so because the qāzī had been thinking not of the prayer he had been uttering, but of a new-born filly he had left in the compound, dangerously near a well. The qāzī was now convinced of Nānak's powers and made his submission. The people all followed his example and Daulat Khān was so impressed that he offered to surrender his entire authority and all his property to the Gurū. When he returned home he found that his treasury had been miraculously filled.¹ Gurū Nānak then left Sultānpur, taking with him Mardānā the bard.

12.20 After leaving the town the Gurū and Mardānā first proceeded to a wilderness and for some time deliberately avoided all inhabited places. On one occasion Mardānā became hungry and was sent ahead to a village of Uppal khatrīs to receive the generous offerings they would make. On another occasion Mardānā entered a town where reverence, clothing, and money were lavished upon him. He returned laden to the Gurū, but was told to throw the offerings away

¹The India Office Library manuscript Panj. B40 omits this reference

as they were unnecessary encumbrances.

13.21 Journeying on they came to the house of a certain Sheikh Sajjaṇ. The house was situated out in the country and its owner had built both a temple and a mosque. These were ostensibly for the convenience of Hindu and Muslim travellers, but Sajjaṇ was a thag and his real purpose was to lure travellers into his house in order that he might murder them and so acquire their wealth. His method of despatching his guests was to throw them into a well. Bābā Nānak and Mardānā were welcomed in the usual way and when night came they were invited to take rest. Before doing so the Gurū sang a śabad. The words of the song convicted Sajjaṇ of his sin and falling at the Gurū's feet he implored forgiveness. This was granted on condition that he made restitution for all he had stolen. The Hāfizābād manuscript adds that the first dharmsālā was built there.¹

14.22 After leaving Sajjaṇ they travelled to Pāṇīpat where Gurū Nānak held a successful discourse with Sheikh Sharaf, the Pīr of Pāṇīpat. The name of the Pīr's disciple is given

¹I.e. the first Sikh dharmsālā, or first building dedicated to worship and service.

15.24 as Sheikh Ṭaṭihar. From Pāṇipat they proceeded on to Delhi where they encountered some mahouts employed by Sultan Ibrāhīm Beg.¹ The mahouts were bewailing the death of the elephant which had provided their employment. At the Gurū's bidding they stroked the dead animal's face and uttered "Vāhigurū!" The elephant was immediately restored to life and the sultan, hearing of the miracle, asked for a repetition of it. The elephant duly died again, but Gurū Nānak made no effort to revive it. His cryptic explanation was, however, understood by the sultan and accepted as a thoroughly laudable one. Neither of the śloks said to have been spoken on this occasion are in the Ādi Granth.

16.25 These early incidents were evidently a part of the first udāsī, but this is not explicitly declared to have begun until after the Delhi visit. Sākhī 16 records that the first udāsī was to the east and that on this journey the Gurū's companion was Mardānā. It also details the bizarre dress which he adopted for this journey. It is given as an ochre garment and a white one, a slipper on one foot and a wooden sandal on the other, a faqīr's kafnī² and a necklace of bones around his

¹This is the Hāfizābād reading. The Colebrooke manuscript gives his name as Braham Beg.

²A piece of cloth worn round the waist.

neck, a galandar's hat on his head, and a saffron tilak on his forehead. His food is said to have consisted of air. The same sākhī also refers to a certain Sheikh Bajīd whom they happened to observe being transported in a litter and then being massaged and fanned by servants. In response to Mardānā's enquiry concerning the inequalities of the human condition Bābā Nānak replied, "Joy and pain come in accordance with the deeds of one's previous existence."

17.26 Travelling on they reached Banāras where they sat down in a public square. A paṇḍit named Chatur Dās, who happened to pass, observed with surprise that Gurū Nānak had neither sālgrām, tulsī-mālā, rosary, nor sectarian mark. A discourse ensued, ending with a complete recitation of the lengthy work Oaṅkāru in Rāg Rāmakalī Dakḥṇī,¹ and with the conversion of Chatur Dās.

18.27 The next incident is set in a place which the Purātan janam-sākhīs refer to simply as Nānakmatā.² It was evidently

¹AG pp. 929-38.

²The later janam-sākhīs add that it was formerly called Gorakhmatā (e.g. R p.203). It is identified with a location in Nainī Tal District, 15 miles north-west of Pīlībhīt. Gurū Hargobind is said to have visited it. (MK p.519). Bhāī Gurdās and Miharbān make no reference to the place or the incident.

a Nāth centre and the Siddhs who were there at the time observed that a banyan tree which had stood withered for many years suddenly became green when the Gurū sat beneath it. They sought to persuade him to join their order, but ended by hailing him as a mahān purukh, a great being.

The next four sākhīs are given no explicit geographical location. The first concerns a community of traders who were busy celebrating the birth of a son to the leading merchant and who ignored Mardānā in spite of his obvious hunger. Bābā Nānak is said to have smiled when Mardānā reported their ungracious behaviour and to have informed him that the new arrival would depart next morning. The prophecy proved to be correct for next day the community was lamenting the death of the infant.

20.30 The second one briefly describes a watchman who, because he sought to give the visitors the best food he had available, received an undefined "royal authority".

21.30 The third is the story of a disciple whom the Gurū won while staying in a village during a rainy season. One day the new disciple's neighbour accompanied him to meet the Gurū, but on the way stopped instead at a prostitute's house.

Thereafter they would go out together, one to the Gurū and the other to his mistress, until one day they decided to test the merits of the radically different habits they were following. That same day the neighbour discovered a pot filled with coal, but containing also a gold coin, whereas the disciple had the misfortune to pierce his foot with a thorn. Gurū Nānak explained to them that the neighbour's gift of a gold coin to a sādhū in his previous existence had earned him a pot of gold coins. The disciple, on the other hand, had performed deeds meriting an impaling stake. The neighbour's subsequent immorality had, however, converted all but the original gold coin to coal and the disciple's piety had reduced the impaling stake to a thorn. The story concludes with the pad Mārū 3:

Karapī kāgaḍu manu masavāpī burā bhalā dui
lekha pae.¹

(A man's) conduct is like paper (and his) man
like an inkwell. (The ink from it) inscribes
(on the paper deeds) both evil and good.

22.32 The fourth of the unlocated sākhīs describes an encounter with some thags. Like Sajjaṅ the Thag (in the Purātan version)

¹AG p.990.

these thags decided that the evident brightness of the Gurū's face must surely mean the possession of much concealed wealth on his person. Before killing the travellers, however, the thags were persuaded to send two of their number to a funeral pyre which could be seen burning in the distance. There they observed angels of Rām snatch a body from messengers of Yam. One of the angels explained that the man had been a monstrous sinner and that accordingly he should really have been the rightful property of Yam. "The smoke of his funeral pyre has, however, been seen by that divine gurū whom you came to kill and as a result he has gained access to Paradise (Baikunth)." The thags were appalled to think that they had been about to kill one who imparted salvation simply by seeing smoke. They made their submission and were pardoned on condition that they took up honest agriculture and devoted any surplus they might have to renunciant bhagats.

- 23.33 Sākhī 23 is set in a land called Kaurū¹ or Kāvarū,² a land ruled by female magicians. The queen's name is given as Nūr Shāh. Mardānā went ahead to beg for food and was turned into a lamb by one of the enchantresses. Gurū Nānak, following him, caused a pot to stick to the woman's head and told Mar-

¹Pur JS, p.33.

²Ibid., p.34.

dānā to restore himself by saying "Vāhigurū" and bowing down. The female magicians all converged on Gurū Nānak when they heard what he had done, some riding on trees, some on deerskins, some on the moon, several on a wall, and some on a whole grove of trees. When their efforts to enchant him failed Nūr Shāh herself came and tried magic and various sensual temptations. All failed and the women finally submitted.

- 24.37 Next the Gurū and Mardānā came to a wilderness where they rested. At God's command Kaliyug came to try and deceive the Gurū.¹ To Mardānā's inexpressible terror a great darkness fell and trees were swept away. Next there appeared fire, with smoke ascending on all sides from four abysses of fire. Black clouds then gathered and rain began to fall. Finally, Kaliyug appeared in the form of a demon giant so tall that the top of its head reached to the heavens. It advanced towards them, but the nearer it came the smaller

¹Kaliyug, the fourth and last in the cycle of yugs or cosmic ages, is the period of ultimate degeneracy. In this Purāṇa context the meaning appears to be a manifestation in material form of all the characteristic evils and vices of the fourth yug. The evident impossibility of such a being subsequently led to the tradition that Kaliyug was the name of an evil person who lived in Jagannāth Purī and was converted by the Gurū. MK p.232, Teja Singh, Sikhism, p.37.

it grew until eventually it assumed the form of a man and Kaliyug stood before Bābā Nānak in a respectful posture. In the discourse which followed he sought to tempt him with offers of a beautiful palace, of jewels, of women, of the power to work miracles, and finally of temporal sovereignty. All were rejected by the Gurū, and Kaliyug finally made his submission and asked for salvation.

25.38 Having left Kaliyug the travellers came next to a city of insects. Wherever they looked everything was black and Mardānā was once again in the extremities of terror. Gurū Nānak related to him a macabre story of how a rājā had once shown disrespect to the insects, and of how they had first destroyed his army with poison and then revived it with amrit.

Sākhīs 26 and 27 obviously constitute a single story.

26.40 The first concerns a village which refused hospitality and
27.40 the second a village which gave it liberally. After leaving the second village Gurū Nānak uttered the pronouncement: "May this town be uprooted and its inhabitants scattered." When Mardānā observed that this was strange justice indeed, he explained that the inhabitants of the first village would, if dispersed, corrupt others, whereas those of the second

would spread true beliefs.

28.40 After this they reached the land of Āsā and there found Sheikh Farīd sitting in a jungle. Three incidents are recorded of the period which they spent with Sheikh Farīd. In the first a devout person offered the two holy men a cup of milk after having surreptitiously dropped four gold coins into it. When he returned later he discovered a gold cup filled with gold coins and realised that by offering worldly things instead of an open heart he had received a worldly reward and so had missed a great opportunity. The second describes a problem which was bothering the people of Āsā. The Rājā of Āsā, Śyām Sundar,¹ had died recently, but in spite of persistent efforts his skull would not burn. The astrologers had been consulted and had declared that he was in affliction as a result of once having told a lie, and that his salvation could not take place until a sādhū set foot in the kingdom. For this reason Farīd and the Gurū were welcomed when they arrived. Farīd declined the honour and insisted that Gurū Nānak should be the one to pass through the gate which had been erected. The Gurū did so, the rājā's skull duly burst, and

¹This is the name given by the Hāfizābād Ms. The Colebrooke Ms gives Samundar.

his soul went free. The third incident describes how Sheikh Farīd threw away a wooden chapātī which he had previously kept in order to have an excuse for refusing food. The rājā's unfortunate experience had shown him what would happen if he were to persist with this falsehood. The sākhī concludes with the statement that there is a mañjī¹ in Āsā.

- 29.45 Much of sākhī 29 is incoherent and the Colebrooke and Hafizābād versions differ considerably. It concerns a visit to a land called Bisīar² where everyone refused hospitality, except a carpenter named Jhaṇḍā. Sitting on "an island in the ocean",³ Gurū Nānak composed a work called the Jugāvalī which he delivered to Jhaṇḍā. There is an obscure reference to a city called Chhuṭhaghāṭakā and there is said to be a mañjī in Bisīar.

¹Literally a small string bed. Gurū Amar Dās, the third Gurū, is said to have divided his Sikhs into twenty-two districts, each under a superintendent (mahant). These districts were called mañjīs. (MK, pp. 634, 750). References to mañjīs in the JSs are anachronisms. The mañjīs were later superseded by the masand system of Gurū Rām Dās. (Teja Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p. 27, n.1).

²Perhaps Bashahr, one of the former Simlā Hill states, situated beyond Kotgarh. (Macauliffe i.93.) This identification is, however, by no means certain. The Bhai Bālā JSs refer to it as "an island in the sea". (BB JS, p. 193. IO Library Ms Panj B41, folio 88.)

³Literally: a sandbank in the ocean.

30.46 During these travels hunger was never a problem for the Gurū, who could subsist on air alone, but for Mardānā it was different. After leaving Bisīar they entered a great desert and here Mardānā's hunger became so extreme that he could proceed no further. Gurū Nānak showed him a tree which would provide him with fruit, but strictly enjoined him to take none with him when they proceeded on. Mardānā disobeyed the command and later ate some of what he had brought with him. He at once collapsed and Gurū Nānak explained that it was a poisonous fruit which had turned to amrit because of the word he had spoken. He then cured him by placing his foot on his forehead.¹

31.48 After twelve years of wandering they eventually arrived back at Talvaṇḍī and stopped in the jungle at a distance of two kos from the village. Mardānā was given permission to enter the village, and was instructed to go to Kālū's house as well as his own. He was, however, to refrain from mentioning Nānak's name. In the village he received a reverent

¹IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folios 30 ff, places this sākhī immediately after the Pur JS's sākhī 12 (see supra p. 198), combining the two in a single sākhī. This corresponds with Miharbān's arrangement. It is not possible to say whether the compiler of the B40 Ms intended the incident to be placed at the beginning or end of the first udāsī as it is the only incident he records between the departure from Sultānpur and the return to Talvaṇḍī. The B40 sākhī concludes: 'Jā Saltānpuro udās hoā tā barasī bārī phir Pañjāb dī dharatī āiā.' (Folio 32.)

yet warm welcome. When asked where Nānak was he replied: "Brethren, when Bābā was in Sultānpur I was with him, but since then I have had no news of him". The Gurū's mother refused to believe this and when he left the village she followed him at a distance. A touching reunion with her son followed. Kālū galloped after her as soon as he received the news and did his best to persuade Nānak to remain in Talvaṇḍī. The Gurū insisted, however, that they were udāsīs and that the settled life was not their calling.

32.52 Leaving Talvaṇḍī Gurū Nānak and Mardānā visited the Rāvī and Chenāb rivers and then proceeded south towards Pāk Paṭṭan.¹ In the jungle, three kos outside the town, they encountered Sheikh Kamāl, a disciple of Sheikh Brahm who was the contemporary incumbent of Sheikh Farīd's takht. Kamāl informed his master and Sheikh Brahm went out to converse at length with the Gurū.

33.56 From Pāk Paṭṭan the couple moved north-east and passing through Dīpālpur,² Kaṅganpur,³ Kasūr,⁴ and Paṭṭī,⁵ entered

¹Montgomery District.

²A tahsīl town in Montgomery District.

³A village in Chūpiā tahsīl, Lahore District.

⁴Lahore District.

⁵A village in Kasūr tahsīl.

Goindvāl.¹ There no one would give them shelter except
 34.57 a faqīr who was a leper and who, as a result of the meeting,
 was healed. They then travelled on through Sultānpur,²
 Vairovāl,³ and Jalālābād,⁴ and entered a village called
 Kīrī Paṭhāṇān⁵ where the Gurū made more disciples.

35.58 From there they moved north through Baṭālā to Saidpur,
 or Sayyidpur, the present Eminābād in Gujranwālā District.
 By this time they had been joined by some faqīrs and all
 were hungry. Gurū Nānak himself asked the townsfolk for
 food, but the Paṭhāns who lived there were all busy celebrating
 marriages and paid no attention to his requests. This lack of
 response made him exceedingly angry and in his wrath he uttered
 the śabad 'Jaisī mai āvai Khasama kī bāṇī'.⁶

A brāhmaṇ who had evidently heard the pad, and who had
 recognised it as a summons to Bābur the Mughal to punish the

¹Taran Taran tahsīl, Amritsar District.

²Jullundur District. See sākhī 8.

³Taran Taran tahsīl.

⁴There is a town of this name in Ferozepore District, but it is a common name and the itinerary which is being followed suggests a village in Amritsar District.

⁵Amritsar District. (Macauliffe i.108.)

⁶Rāg Tilāṅg 5, AG p.722.

town, brought an offering of fruit and asked the Gurū to retract his curse. Gurū Nānak replied that what had been uttered could not be recalled, but assured the brāhman that if he were to remove his family to a pool twelve kos¹ away they would all be saved. The following day Bābur arrived and fell upon Saidpur. Everyone in it, Muslim as well as Hindu, was slaughtered, houses were looted and then razed to the ground, and the surrounding countryside was devastated.

At some stage the Gurū and Mardānā were seized and committed to the Saidpur jail under the supervision of a certain Mīr Khān. Both were made to do forced labour, Gurū Nānak as a coolie and Mardānā as a horse attendant. Mīr Khān, when he came to watch the prisoners, was startled to observe that the Gurū's load remained suspended a full cubit above his head and that the horse followed Mardānā without a halter. This information was conveyed to Bābur who declared: "Had I known there were such faqīrs here I should not have destroyed the town." He accompanied Mīr Khān to where the prisoners were working and observed that a hand-mill which had been issued to Gurū Nānak turned without any assistance.

¹Colebrooke Ms. The Hāfizābād Ms gives two kos (Pur JS, p.59).

Bābur then approached the Gurū who uttered two śabads. Hearing these the Mughal fell and kissed his feet, and offered him a favour. Gurū Nānak asked for all the prisoners to be released and Bābur at once issued orders to free them and restore their property. The prisoners, however, refused to go unless Gurū Nānak accompanied them. Mardānā subsequently asked why so many had suffered for the sins of one¹ and was told that he would be given his reply after he had slept under a nearby tree. While he was sleeping ants were attracted by a drop of grease which had fallen on his chest. One of the ants bit him, and, without waking, Mardānā brushed them away, killing them all as he did so. This, Gurū Nānak subsequently informed him, was his answer.

To this the Hafizābād manuscript adds a lengthy account of the manner in which Bābur, who was really a clandestine qalandar, was impressed by the Gurū. When asked to free the prisoners he agreed to do so on condition that his throne should endure for ever. Gurū Nānak would promise only that the kingdom would endure "for a time". This was accepted as sufficient and the prisoners were all released.

¹The identity of the culprit is not indicated.

36.66 Leaving Saidpur, Gurū Nānak and Mardānā passed through Pasrūr¹ and came to the small fortress of a certain Mīā Miṭhā. They stopped in a grove at a distance of one kos and when Mīā Miṭhā was informed of the Gurū's arrival he declared he would skim him as cream is skimmed off milk. Gurū Nānak replied that he would squeeze Mīā Miṭhā as he squeezed juice from a lemon. A debate followed and Mīā Miṭhā finally made his submission.

37.70 Next Gurū Nānak proceeded to Lahore where his coming was brought to the notice of a wealthy Dhuppar khatri named Dunī Chand who happened to be celebrating his father's śrāddh. In response to Dunī Chand's invitation Gurū Nānak came and upon arrival asked him what point there was in feeding brāhmins when his father had not eaten for three days. Dunī Chand at once asked where his father was to be found and was informed that he had been born as a wolf and was lying under a pilū bush² five kos away. He at once took food out to his reincarnated father and was told by the wolf that the unfortunate rebirth was a result of having coveted some boiling fish when at the point of death.

¹Siālkot District.

²The māl or jāl bush. Tradition regards the tree with the stationary shadow as a māl (sakhī 5) and the gurdwara erected on what was believed to be the spot is called Māl Sāhib. MK, p.724.

Duni Chand subsequently took Gurū Nānak to his house. Over the door were seven flags, each representing a lakh of rupees. The Gurū made no comment, but gave his host a needle with the request that he return it in the hereafter. "Good God!" exclaimed his wife when he told her what the Gurū had said. "Will this needle accompany you to the hereafter?" Appreciating the force of her rhetorical question Duni Chand took the needle back to Gurū Nānak who asked him: "If a needle cannot go there how can these flags get there?"

38.72 Sākhī 38 provides the setting for a denunciation of unnecessary ceremonial purity. An excessively scrupulous brāhman refused Gurū Nānak's food and tried to dig a cooking square which would satisfy his own notions of purity. After digging all day and everywhere turning up bones he finally made his submission.

39.72 The next incident evidently belongs to a later period for it describes Gurū Nānak's practice of daily communal kīrtan. The Gurū happened to observe that a boy aged seven had become a regular attender and one day asked him why he engaged in such serious practices at such an early age. In reply the boy related that the necessity of doing so had been impressed upon him as a result of his having observed how when he kindled a fire the small sticks were consumed first. The boy's name is not given.

The two sākhīs which conclude the Purātan account of the first udāsī are recorded in the Hafizābād manuscript, 40.73 but not the Colebrooke. According to the first of them Gurū Nānak took up residence on the banks of the river near Talvaṇḍī¹ where crowds of people flocked to see him. A wealthy man who lived in an neighbouring village concluded that Nānak was taking advantage of this popularity to corrupt both Hindus and Muslims, and that accordingly he should be imprisoned. He set out to make the arrest, but on the way was struck blind. This convinced him that Nānak must indeed be a great pīr and, greatly chastened, he remounted his horse, only to fall off again. The people who had observed these misfortunes assured him that the only proper way to approach a great pīr was on foot. This he did and was so impressed by the Gurū that he decided to build for him a village which was to be called Kartārpur.

41.74 The second of the Hafizābād sākhīs relates the story of Bhāgīrath and an unnamed shopkeeper. A poor Sikh once came to the Gurū asking for financial assistance in order that he might have his daughter married. Gurū Nānak acceded to the request and despatched another Sikh, Bhāgīrath, to Lahore with

¹Evidently the Ravi.

instructions to purchase everything that would be required and to return at all costs that same day. Failure to do so would mean forfeiting his opportunity of salvation.

The shopkeeper to whom he went for his purchases provided him with everything except a set of bangles, informing him that these could not possibly be ready until the next day. When Bhāgīrath insisted that delay was more than his salvation was worth the shopkeeper became curious and decided to visit this gurū who could evidently give or withhold salvation as he pleased. He provided a set of bangles from his own house and set off with Bhāgīrath. While they were still on the way the Gurū's voice came to them. The shopkeeper was instantly convinced and spent three years with Gurū Nānak before returning to Lahore.

When he eventually did return it was to entrust his property to other shopkeepers. He then embarked on a ship, sailed to the city where Rājā Śivanābh lived, and there established a trading business. He lived a life of great piety there, but it was not one which accorded with the superstitious practices of the local people. These people were not Hindus and they made a point of defiling any Hindus who went there. The shopkeeper did not observe local practices, but nor did he follow Hindu customs and so eventually he was reported to the rājā. Śivanābh

summoned him, demanded an explanation, and was given a description of Gurū Nānak. This aroused a great longing in him for an opportunity to meet the Gurū. The shopkeeper replied that the proper place to meet him was in his own heart, but before leaving comforted the rājā with the assurance that the Gurū would one day come to him in person. He warned him, however, that there could be no knowing the guise in which he would come.

After the shopkeeper had sailed away Rājā Śivanābh devised a method of testing all visiting faqīrs. Summoning a number of alluring women he instructed them to exercise their charms on any faqīrs or udāsīs who might arrive, knowing full well that in this degenerate age only the perfect Gurū would be able to resist such advances.

42.78 Sākhī 42 opens with the announcement that Gurū Nānak's second udāsī was to the south. The Purāṭan/janam-sākhīs are confused concerning the number and names of his companions on this journey. The Hāfizābād manuscript usually gives their number as two and their names as Saido and Gheho, both Jats, but in one place it refers to three companions named Saido, Gheho, and Sīho, again all Jats, and in another simply to Saido and Sīho. The Colebrooke manuscript usually names

them Saïdo a Jaṭ and Sīho a Ghei,¹ but in one place refers to them as Saïdo and Gheho.

The first visit was to a country called Dhanāsarī where the two companions encountered Khwājā Khizar.² They had previously come to the conclusion that Gurū Nānak's frequent visits to the river were for the purpose of worshipping this deity and had themselves begun worshipping him. One night, however, they met Khwājā Khizar himself taking an offering
43.80 to the Gurū whom he worshipped daily. While in Dhanāsarī the Gurū conducted a successful discourse with Anabhī, the superior of a very influential Jain monastery. He then completed Mājh kī Vār³ and proceeded on.

44.81 The next recorded incident is set on "an island in the ocean, in foreign parts, where a savage man exercised tyrannical rule". The savage seized the Gurū and set about cooking him in a cauldron. Instead of becoming hot, however, the cauldron became cooler. Perceiving this the cannibal fell at the Gurū's feet and asked for salvation. Siho administered

¹A khatrī sub-caste.

²A mythical Muslim saint who in many parts of India has been identified with a river god or with a spirit of wells and streams. Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. ii, p.865. R. C. Temple, The Legends of the Panjab, vol.i, p.221.

³AG, pp. 137-50.

pāhul to him and so he became a Sikh. The savage's name is not given.

45.82 The sākhī which follows is both confused and fantastic.

It concerns a meeting with Makhdūm Bahāuddīn whom Gurū Nānak
46.84 encountered sporting in the sea on his prayer-mat. After
this Gurū Nānak is said to have travelled out into the ocean
to converse with Machhendranāth and Gorakhnāth.

47.86 Sākhī 47 records another crossing of the ocean, this
time to the kingdom of Śivanābh in Siṅghalādīp.¹ When they
arrived there Śivanābh's garden, which had been withered for
years, suddenly blossomed. The gardener reported this to
the rājā who at once sent his alluring women to test this
new arrival. Later Śivanābh came himself and after question-
ing the Gurū invited him to his palace. Bābā Nānak replied
that he did not travel on foot, but that he required as his
mount one who was of royal blood and ruler of a city. Śivanābh
at once offered himself and the Gurū proceeded to the palace
on the rājā's back.

At the palace Śivanābh and his wife, Chandarakalā, asked
him what he wished to eat. In reply the Gurū asked for human
flesh and specified that it was to be that of "a son who is of

¹Ceylon.

royal parentage and twelve years old". Śivanābh consulted his son's janam-patrī and discovered that he was, as required, twelve years of age. Both the boy and his wife agreed that the Gurū's wish should be met, and while the mother held his arms and the wife his feet Śivanābh proceeded to cut his son's throat. The body was then stewed and placed before the Gurū who instructed them to shut their eyes, utter "Vāhigurū", and begin to eat. This they did and when they opened their eyes again the Gurū had disappeared. As a result of this experience the rājā became mad, but twelve months later was vouchsafed a darsan¹ and became a Sikh.

The partly incoherent conclusion of this sakhī records that while in Siṅgalādīp Gurū Nānak composed the Prān Saṅgalī. A saṅgat met regularly in the dharmśālā and there secret teachings were revealed. Rājā Śivanābh received a mañjī² and Gurū Nānak departed.

48.90 The final sakhī of the second udāsī describes how Gurū Nānak wrecked the hut of an hospitable carpenter. The reason for this seemingly ungrateful action was revealed when the carpenter discovered under the remains of his broken bed four

¹An audience and, in contexts such as this, specifically an audience with a person of considerable spiritual stature. It is not clear whether the writer intends this to be understood as another meeting or as a vision.

²See supra p. 208, n. 1.

pots of gold.

49.90 The third udāsī was to the north and Gurū Nānak's companions this time were Hassū, a blacksmith, and Sīhān, a calico-printer. On his head and feet he wore leather and round his whole body he bound rope. They first travelled to Kashmīr where a paṇḍit named Brahm Dās came to meet them wearing an idol round his neck and bringing with him two camels loaded with Purāṇas. The discourse which followed converted him and he threw away his idol.

His conversion was, however, incomplete and one day Bābā Nānak told him to take a gurū. For this purpose he directed Brahm Dās to some faqīrs out in the waste land, and they sent him on to a nearby temple. There a woman in crimson beat him severely with a shoe and the wailing paṇḍit returned to the faqīrs to be informed that he had just met Māyā, the gurū he had hitherto served. This completed Brahm Dās's conversion. He threw away his books and became a humble servant of the sants.

50.94 After leaving Kashmīr, Gurū Nānak traversed many mountains and eventually ascended Mount Sumeru where he conversed with Śiv, Gorakhnāth, Bharatharī, Gopīchand, and Charapaṭ. The Siddhs sent him to fill a pot with water, but when it kept filling with jewels the Gurū broke it, repaired it, ex-

orcised the spell with a ślok, and then filled it with water.

A lengthy discourse followed, at the end of which the Siddhs suggested that Nānak should proceed to the village of Achal where many Siddhs would be gathered for a mela. The journey, they informed him, would take them three days as they travelled on the wind. They then departed, obviously expecting to arrive well before him. The Gurū, however, was transported there in an instant and at their arrival the Siddhs from Mount Sumeru were amazed to hear from others at the mela that Nānak had appeared three days previously. A brief discourse followed.

51.98 The fourth udāsī took Gurū Nānak westwards to Meccā, evidently without a regular companion. For this journey he wore leather shoes and pājāmā, a blue garment, and a necklace of bones. Having reached his destination he went to sleep with his feet in the direction of Meccā¹ and a qāzī named Rukan-dīn who happened to observe him in this position rebuked him severely. The Gurū suggested that the qāzī should drag his feet round and leave them pointing in a direction away from God and the Ka'bah. Rukan-dīn complied

¹This may indicate the Ka'bah, or it may mean that the original sākhī was not set in Meccā. Cf infra pp. 391, 393. The B40 Ms records that it was with his feet towards the miharāb that Gurū Nānak went to sleep. (Folio 51.)

and was amazed to discover that as he moved the Gurū's feet the miharāb moved with them. He summoned Pīr Pataliā and the three engaged in discourse. At its conclusion Gurū Nānak uttered "Vāhigurū" and water appeared in the wells, thus fulfilling a prophecy contained in the Muslim scriptures that Nānak, a darves, would come and cause water to spring in the wells of Mecca.

52.104 The fifth udāsī was a much shorter one than any of the previous four. On this journey the Gurū travelled to Gorakh-haṭṭarī where he met Siddhs and held the discourse which is recorded in Rāmakalī Siddh Gost.¹ The Siddhs sought to impress him with displays of their magical power, but without success.

53.106 Sakhī 53 describes the conversion of Lahipā who was subsequently to become Gurū Aṅgad. Lahipā lived in Khaḍūr² where he was the pujāri of the Tehapā (Trehaṇ) khatriś. In the same town there lived a Bhallā khatriś who was a Sikh, the only person there who did not worship Durgā. One day Lahipā happened to overhear him reciting the Japji and this so impressed him that, having learnt the identity of the

¹AG, pp. 938-46.

²Amritsar District.

author, he went at once and became a disciple. Having done so he proved himself a faithful follower. He regularly scoured the Gurū's pots and waved the fan, and on one occasion willingly ruined a new suit of clothes in order to obey a command to bring in some wet grass. The sākhī also refers to Durgā's practice of coming every eighth day to serve the Gurū, and terminates with an incoherent story concerning a maid-servant who once sought to waken the Gurū by licking his feet.

54.107 Gorakhnāth once visited Gurū Nānak and the Gurū devised a test to show him how many true followers he had. The two set out walking, followed by the Sikhs. At the Gurū's command copper coins appeared on the ground and many of his followers picked them up and departed. Next silver coins appeared and then gold coins. Each time he lost more Sikhs and after the appearance of the gold coins only two remained. Further on they came to a burning funeral pyre. Over the corpse there was a sheet and from it there issued a foul smell. The Gurū asked if there was anyone prepared to eat the corpse and at this one of the two remaining Sikhs fled, leaving only Lahipā to obey the command. Lahipā asked which end he should begin to eat and was instructed to start at the feet. Raising the sheet he found Gurū Nānak lying

there. Gorakhnāth, impressed by this display of loyal obedience, declared, "He who is born from a part (aṅg) of you will be your Gurū," and the name Aṅgad was accordingly bestowed on Lahipā.

55.108 In sākhi 55 Makhdūm Bahāuddīn reappears, this time as the Pīr of Multān and as one near death. Realising this he sent a ślok to Gurū Nānak in Talvaṇḍī, informing him of the fact, and received in reply another ślok with the comment: "You go and I shall follow after forty days." Loudly lamenting the prospect of forty days of darkness Makhdūm Bahāuddīn passed away.

56.110 Gurū Nānak was also aware of approaching death. Before it took place he appointed Aṅgad as his successor by laying five paisā in front of him and prostrating himself before him. The news at once spread that he was about to die and Hindus and Muslims flocked for a last darśan. He then went and sat under a withered acacia, which at once bloomed, and his family gathered around him weeping. His sons asked what would become of them and were assured that they would be cared for. A dispute then arose between the Muslims and Hindus, the former claiming that they would bury the Gurū's body and the latter that they would cremate it. The Gurū

himself settled the argument by instructing the Hindus to lay flowers on his right and the Muslims to place them at his left. Whichever side's flowers were fresh on the following day should have his body to dispose of as they wished. The saṅgat then sang Kīrtan Sohilā and Āratī, and the concluding śloka of the Japjī. Gurū Nānak covered himself with a sheet and went to sleep. When the sheet was raised the body had gone and the flowers on both sides were still fresh. The Hindus took their share away and the Muslims did likewise. The date was the 10th day of the light half of Asu, S. 1595, and it was at Kartarpur that Gurū Nānak passed away.

The Life of Gurū Nānak according to the Miharbān Janam-sakhī

The Puratan Janam-sakhī contains only fifty-six sakhīs and accordingly it has been possible to include them all in the outline given above. In the case of Miharbān's Pothī Sach-khaṇḍ this is not possible, but the exclusion of some individual goṣṭs need not involve any significant omissions as far as the biography of Gurū Nānak is concerned. Several of the goṣṭs offer no biographical details and frequently a single episode is spread over more than one goṣṭ.¹

¹The Miharbān JS is divided, not into sakhīs, but into goṣṭs (discourses). The first of the figures in the margin indicates the number of each goṣṭ, and the second figure the page on which it begins in Kirpāl Singh's edition.

1-3.1 The first three gosts concern Rājā Janak who in the Tretāyug had been a great yogī as well as a great king and who had been responsible for emptying narak (hell) and having its occupants transferred to svarag (heaven) by twice persuading Dharamrāj to weigh all their offences against the merit earned by him through a single gharī of meditation on the Nām. In the Kaliyug he is interviewed by God who decides that he shall be sent into the world again for its salvation and that his name shall be Nānak.

4.9 The details of his birth are given in the fourth sākhī. His father was Kālū, a Bedī khatri, and his mother's name is given as Tiparā. The Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript¹ gives the village of Chāhalāvāle² as the place where the birth took place, but the other Khālsā College manuscript³ omits this detail and in gost 17 the Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript gives "Talavaṇḍī Rāi Bhoe kī" as the birthplace.⁴ The date given in the Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript is a moonlit night in

¹See supra pp. 106-7.

²The village of Chāhal in the area of Thāpā Barakī, Lahore District, is traditionally regarded as the home of Gurū Nānak's maternal grandparents. MK p.345.

³See supra pp. 115-16.

⁴Mih JS, p.52. Also gost 141, p.470.

Vaisākh, S.1526, and the second manuscript adds that it was the third day.¹ The hour is said to have been the last watch of the night. There was great celebration, both in heaven and in the village, and Hindus and Muslims of all tribes and ranks came to offer their congratulations. On the ninth day he was given his name. Various faculties are recorded as having developed with consecutive months during the first year, at eighteen months, and with each year up to the age of five, when he began to give utterance to spiritual wisdom. Hindus declared that he was the image of God and Muslims that truly he was a godly child.

- 5.11 At the age of seven Nānak was taken to a paṇḍit to learn how to read. The paṇḍit wrote out the alphabet for him, but the child kept silent and refused to repeat it. A discourse followed based, as in the Purātan account, on the pad Sirī Rāgu 6,² and at its conclusion the pāndhā acknowledged that one so wise should certainly be permitted to decide what was best for himself. The writer adds that he knew everything for he was a pūran purukhu avatāru.

¹'Vaisākho din tījai.' Mih JS, p. 9 n.5.

²AG, p.16.

6.15 When he was eight years old Nānak would play with groups of other children and give them instruction in the things of God. During this period Kālū decided that he should learn 'Turkī',¹ and summoned a mullāh for this purpose. This time Nānak applied himself and startled both the mullāh and the village with his incredible progress. Within a matter of days he had mastered Hindvī, Persian, Arabic, and accounting. After this he became silent and refused to communicate with anyone. The mullāh was called again and with some difficulty managed to persuade Nānak to speak. When he did eventually speak it was to utter the pad Tilāṅg 1.² Hearing it the mullāh saluted him as a blessed child.

7.20 When he reached the age of nine arrangements were made for him to be invested with the janeū. It appears that he did not actually refuse the sacred thread as gost 11 makes reference to his wearing it,³ but the occasion provided him with an opportunity to criticize external practices, and to uphold acceptance of the Nām and praises offered to God as the only true janeū.

¹Persian. It is also referred to as Musalamānī.

²AG, p.721.

³Mih JS, p.29.

- 8.22 The next recorded incident is the restoration of the crop ruined by Nānak's buffaloes. This is said to have occurred at the age of about ten or twelve and is substantially the same as in the Purātan account.¹ One significant difference is that the landlord's name is given as Rāi Bhoā, not Rāi Bulār. Two minor differences are that the field is said to have contained paddy, not wheat, and that the reason given for Nānak's negligence is meditation, not sleep. Gosṭ 9 relates the story of the tree's stationary shadow² and in gosṭ 10 Rāi Bhoā discusses with Kālū the significance of this incident and that of the restored field. The owner of the field is summoned to ascertain that he had told the truth and Rāi Bhoā assures Kālū that Nānak is obviously no ordinary son. Nānak's age at the time when Rāi Bhoā observed the stationary shadow is given as thirteen or fourteen.
- 9.24
- 10.27
- 11.29 About the time of his sixteenth birthday Gurū Nānak was betrothed to the daughter of Mūlā, a Chopā (khatri) of Baṭālā. The betrothal ceremony is said to have been held

¹See supra pp. 193-4.

²See supra p. 194.

- 12.33 on Vaisākh vadi 1, S.1542. The wedding took place in Baḥālā soon afterwards and when it was over Nānak returned with his family to Talvaṇḍī. In gost 22 his wife's name is given as Ghumī.¹
- 13.38 At the age of twenty Gurū Nānak lapsed into silence and inactivity, and his mother's efforts to rouse him were.
- 14.40 fruitless. In the following gost he explains that his silence is the result of having no godly people to converse with. This gost is evidently out of sequence as it gives his age as twenty-six. The second Khālsā College manuscript gives it as gost 21 and the two versions appear to differ considerably.²
- 15.16 Gost 15 records that he neither ate, drank,
45 nor spoke for four or five days³ and that eventually the anxious townsfolk persuaded Kālū to call a vaid. The vaid duly came and feeling his pulse pronounced it a case of madness. Nānak's reply was essentially the same as that given

¹Mih JS, p.67.

²Ibid., p.40 n.4.

³This is the reading of the second Ms. The Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī Ms gives four months. Mih JS, p. 45 n.8.

in the Purātan version,¹ and the vaid acknowledged him as Gurū.

17.52 Next family pressure was tried. Gurū Nānak was
summoned before a family conclave and the Bedīs remonstrated
with him, seeking to persuade him to take up agriculture.
18.55 The effort was unsuccessful and so too was another which the
19.58 family made when he was twenty-two. At the age of twenty-four²
he expressed to his mother the intense longing for the Nām
which the chatrik's cry had aroused in his heart one monsoon
20.61 night, and comforted her with the assurance that a life of
21.63 renunciation did not bring sadness. A year or two later³
he uttered the pad Basant 1⁴ as a reply to the villagers who
had sought to persuade him to join the festival celebrating
the advent of spring.

¹Both versions give as his reply Malār 7 and 8, AG pp. 1256-7; Vār Malār, śloks 1 and 2 of paūrī 3, AG p.1280 (the second of which is by Gurū Aṅgad); and a pad which is not in the AG. The Purātan MSS add Gaurī 17, AG p.156, and a ślok which is not in the AG. The greater length of the Miharbān account is, as usual, chiefly the result of the interpretation which is added to the bānī.

²The second Khālsā College Ms gives "twenty-five or twenty-six", Mih JS, p.58 n.1.

³In this case, the second Khālsā College Ms gives twenty-four. Mih JS, p.63 n.8.

⁴AG, p.1168.

22.66 When Gurū Nānak was twenty-seven or twenty-eight his two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand, were born. At the age of thirty his renunciate tendencies became even more pronounced and he abandoned all other activity in favour of discussions with yogīs and sannyāsīs. Efforts 22-23. made by both his father and mother to persuade him to take 67 up agriculture, shopkeeping, trade, or civil service employment met with the usual negative response.

24.72 Eventually Jai Rām, his brother-in-law, came to the rescue with his suggestion that Nānak should join him in Sultānpur. The invitation was accepted and Gurū Nānak departed, leaving his wife in the meantime, but taking Mardānā the ḍūm with him. Jai Rām is described as an Uppal khatri and as Daulat Khān Lodī's steward. The Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript gives his home as Khānpur and the second manuscript as Sultānpur. The name of his wife, Gurū Nānak's sister, is not recorded. Gurū Nānak's age at the time is given as thirty-five years, six and a half months.

His meeting with Jai Rām and his interview with Daulat Khān are described in some detail. At the interview he presented to the Nawāb a fine Iraqi horse and an offering of money, and in return received a robe of honour. Daulat

Khān pronounced himself highly pleased with the new arrival and commanded that all authority over his province and property be entrusted to Nānak. This was evidently to be understood as complimentary hyperbole as the employment to which he was actually assigned was in Daulat Khān's commissariat. His daily life, combining pious exercises with proper fulfilment of his secular duties, is also described.

25-26. It was not long, however, before doubts began to arise
77 in the Gurū's mind. He continued to fulfil his responsibilities in the commissariat, but his mind turned increasingly to spiritual things, even while he was engaged in his quartermaster
27.83 duties. In a discourse with his cook he expressed his concern
28.85 at his involvement in worldly affairs. Eventually the climax of his developing spiritual crisis came with the summons to the court of God, received while he was taking his regular early-morning bathe in the river.

28-29 As in the Purātan account the river is not named, but
85 the author indicates that it was in the direction of Goindvāl. One morning Nānak plunged in as usual, but did not reappear, having been transported to the divine court. Miharbān's version is characteristically diffuse, occupying four times the space of the Purātan account without making any significant

additions to it. The river was dragged without success and on the third day Nānak emerged to the acclamation of the crowd, gave away his belongings, and joined a group of faqīrs. The people were perplexed and many concluded that he must be possessed. Some of the common folk, observing that he appeared to be conforming to neither Hindu nor Muslim practice, asked him what path he was now following. He replied: "There is neither Hindu nor Musalman so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Musalman and the path which I follow is God's."¹

29-32
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This comment was conveyed to the local qāzī and at his request Nānak was summoned before Daulat Khān to answer for it. Once again Miharbān provides an account which is appreciably longer than that of the Purātan janam-sākhīs, but which adds nothing except extra bānī, protracted expositions, and incidental details of no importance. The Gurū successfully answered the qāzī's charge, humbled him by reading his thoughts during namāz, and expounded to him and to Daulat Khān the meaning of true namāz. At its conclusion Daulat Khān prostrated himself adoringly and Gurū Nānak assured him that he had attained salvation. Taking the dust of the Gurū's feet the Nawāb returned

¹Mih JS, p. 92.

home. No reference is made to his treasury having been miraculously filled.

- 34.104 Bābā Nānak and Mardānā then set out on the first udāsī, having spent two years in Sultānpur.¹ As in the
- 35.106 Purātan janam-sākhīs the account of this udāsī begins with a description of how Mardānā would enter a village to ask for food whenever necessary, and of how the Gurū commanded him to throw away the money and clothing which one generous village had bestowed on him as offerings.² Following this experience they entered a wilderness devoid of human habitation. Mardānā became apprehensive, but the Gurū calmed his fears by assuring him that no place where the Nām was repeated
- 36.109 could be uninhabited. Some days later there occurred the incident of the forbidden fruit. Both the assurance concerning the Nām and Mardānā's disobedient consumption of extra fruit are related in the Purātan janam-sākhīs, but the sākhī which includes them is placed near the end of the Purātan's first

¹In other words, according to Miharbān Gurū Nānak began his travels at the age of thirty-seven and a half.

²The Purātan MSS explicitly state that the first udāsī began after they had left Delhi. (See supra p.200.). It seems clear, however, that the four preceding sākhīs must belong to the first udāsī.

udāsī.¹ Miharbān's setting is more logical. In both cases Mardānā promises to follow the Gurū if he will be patient with one who, unlike the Gurū himself, is subject to human limitations, and the terms in which the discourses are conducted fit the early stages of an udāsī more appropriately than the concluding stages.

37.112 After a conversation with some herons² Gurū Nānak and Mardānā reached Delhi where they observed food being distributed to mendicants on behalf of the king, whose name is given as Salem Shāh Paṭhāṇ. The Gurū preached to the people on the necessity of the Nām and the entire population became his Sikhs. There is no mention of a resurrected elephant.

39.116 Leaving Delhi they proceeded on to the Ganges where, as it happened to be a festival day, they observed thousands of people bathing in the river. The festival which was being celebrated was that of Baisākhī and the pilgrims were throwing water in the direction of the rising sun. Gurū Nānak also entered the river and began splashing water in the opposite direction. This provoked offended demands for an explanation.

¹Sākhī 30. See supra p. 209.

²See supra p.

The Gurū responded by asking his questioners to whom they thought they were conveying water and they replied that they were sending it to their ancestors in dev lok. Gurū Nānak then informed them that he was, in the same way, watering his fields near Lahore. When this brought a scornful rejoinder he answered that if their water could travel as far as dev lok his could certainly reach Lahore. This silenced them for they now realised that they were conversing with a mahā purukh. Continuing the discourse on the banks of the river he emphasised the futility of mantars and cooking squares. The conclusion of the gost, which describes the pilgrims who accepted his teaching as the first Sikhs, is evidently an Udāsī interpolation. Its language is more modern, it conflicts with the earlier reference to the conversion of Delhi, and it affirms the adoption of celibacy. Two more discourses follow. The first of these, another discourse on cooking squares, provides a setting for Basant 3¹, which in the Purātan janam-sākhī is set in an entirely different incident.²

The second refers to Hardwār as the location of these discussions with Vaiṣṇava pilgrims.

¹AG, p.1169.

²Sākhī 38. See supra p. 215.

- 43.128 From Hardwār Gurū Nānak and Mardānā moved on to the Trivenī at Prayāg (Allahābād) where the Gurū's fame had preceded him and a large crowd had gathered to pay their respects. After a discourse with gobind lok (bhagats)
- 44-50. they proceeded on to Banāras where the Gurū had several
130 discourses with paṇḍits and more gobind lok. The first of these was with a single paṇḍit, but he is not named.
- 49.144 On another occasion the entire population of Banāras, and specifically all of the paṇḍits in the city, are said to have been present at a discourse held on the Bisarāti (Viś-rānti) Ghāṭ, and at the conclusion of the discourse all of the paṇḍits became Sikhs.
- 51.150 After leaving Banāras they came to the city of Rājā Harināth in "the east country" where, to begin with, Gurū Nānak observed silence and was consequently mistaken for a moni.¹ Hearing of his arrival the rājā himself went on foot to meet him, listened to his instruction, and asked if he might accompany him as a disciple. He was, however, to practise simaran seva² while yet remaining a rājā.

¹A faqīr or sādhu who observes complete silence.

²Meditation on the Nām, and service.

52.154 From Rājā Harināth's unnamed city they proceeded "to where Gusāi Kambīr's house was". Kabīr went out to meet Bābā Nānak and in the discourse which followed acknowledged him as the supreme Gurū: "Tūn jagatr gurū hai; ham tere dās hai." In reply Gurū Nānak uttered Gaurī Aṣṭapadī 8,¹ a pad implying very high praise of Kabīr.

54.174 Travelling eastwards from where Kabīr lived they came next to Hājīpur Paṭṭā where he discoursed with and converted

55.178 a group of Vaiṣṇavas. Continuing to the east they entered an unnamed city where Gurū Nānak observed his common practice of initial silence and subsequently instructed the members of the pañchayat in the nature of "the true food", namely God Himself.²

56.180 From that city they turned south and, entering a wilder-
57.184 ness, met and conversed with an unidentified rājā. Next they arrived at another unnamed city where Gurū Nānak's presence exercised an attraction so compulsive that eventually the whole city gathered for his darśan and declared him to be an incarn-

¹AG, p.224.

²The pad which Miharban gives is a misquoted version of Gurū Amar Dās's Var Rāmakalī, ślok 1 of paurī 6, p.949.

58.186 nation of God. In the following gost they are back in

"the east country". There they visited Ayodhyā where, after
 59.190 the Gurū had conducted two discourses, "all the bhagats
 gathered at God's command and came to meet him -Nāmdev,
 Jaidev, Kabīr, Tilochan, Ravidās, Saiṇ, Sadhnā, Dhannā,
 Beṇī." A lengthy discourse followed, based on Sirī Rāgu
 10-12,¹ at the end of which the bhagats hailed him and de-
 60.198 parted for Sach Khand. There they reported their experience
 to God who, well pleased to hear their praises, summoned
 Nānak to an interview.

61.200 Leaving Ayodhyā they travelled down to Jagannāth where
 62.203 they met Rājā Bharatharī, the famous yogī.² Gost 62 records
 that they spent three years in "the east country" and that
 having seen it all they turned south. After travelling a
 considerable distance they came to a temple surrounded by a
 desert. There a piece of brick happened to fall on the Gurū
 after he had been meditating, and the consequent pain greatly
 distressed him as he had believed his meditation would free
 him from such suffering. While he was lamenting this the

¹AG, pp. 17-18.

²See supra p. 71, n.1.

voice of God was heard, assuring him that all who live in the world must experience pain of this kind.

63.206 Two strange gosts follow.¹ Gost 63 describes their arrival at a seashore where no water, but only sand was to be seen. Mardānā complained of thirst and Gurū Nānak assured him that water would be found. Further on a jackal appeared and prostrated itself before the Gurū, who explained to Mardānā that the animal had come at God's bidding. He asked it where water was to be found and the jackal led them away in a westerly direction to a deep depression surrounded by high sandhills. In it were two pools. The jackal sniffed at one, bowed its head to the Gurū, and departed. The Gurū indicated that the pool it had sniffed was sweet and Mardānā, taking a long drink, pronounced it Sach-khand kā pānī, heavenly water. Gurū Nānak then asked Mardānā if he was hungry and receiving an affirmative answer removed his clothes and entered the water. When after some time he failed to reappear Mardānā also entered the pool to see if

¹ Both gosts are almost certainly later additions. The occurrences they describe are altogether out of harmony with Miharbān's normal restraint and their style is uncharacteristic in that they contain neither banī nor interpretation. Gosts 69 and 72 are other such examples.

he could find him and, discovering that the Gurū was no longer there, he began to cry in anguish. At once Gurū Nānak emerged from the pool carrying white bread and halvā.¹ He explained that he had gone to God's court where many varieties of tasty food could be obtained, but on account of Mardānā's shouting he had been obliged to return at once bringing only the bread and halvā.

64.209 Gost 64 begins by repeating the story of the jackal and then relates that the travellers entered a desert which was completely devoid of vegetation. After some days Mardānā began to complain of the absence of everything except stars and sand. Gurū Nānak explained that the reason why they had come to that place was that his Master was very jealous and would not tolerate him fastening his attention on anything else. They continued on for some months until Gurū Nānak, observing that Mardānā was still disconsolate, instructed him to sit down. They both did so and Mardānā discovered that

¹A confection.

by looking at the Gurū, who was gazing at the stars, he recovered. Gurū Nānak explained to him that the stars were worlds in which dwelt those bhagats who had served God faithfully, and instructed him to close his eyes. Mardānā did so and was shown Dhrū, Śukr, Budh,¹ and finally Gurū Nānak himself. They then left the desert.

65.211 Their journey southwards finally brought them to
 Rameshwaram where Gurū Nānak recited the pād Dhanāsari Āratī
 66.214 and held discourse with the gobind lok who worshipped the
 67.217 idol there. Journeying on in "the south country" they passed
 through a series of regions in all of which the one God was
 worshipped. The first two of these were human kingdoms, but
 the remainder were areas inhabited only by either spirits or
 animals. In all of them they found the one God worshipped
 and Gurū Nānak gave praise accordingly.

68.221 Next they met Kaliyug who appeared to them as a man
 carrying fire in his hand and raw meat in his mouth. He
 is an altogether milder being than the Purātan version² and

¹The Pole Star, Venus, and Mercury respectively. All three are the names of mythological figures who were subsequently elevated to positions in the heavens.

²See supra pp. 205-6.

explains his coming simply as the result of his desire to meet a great bhagat. A more fearsome monster is encountered in the next gost where a high mountain turns out to be a mighty creature. Gurū Nānak distended himself to the equivalent size, seized the creature, and was about to eat it when Mardānā intervened and begged him to free it. His request was granted, but he was greatly distressed to learn that he had been instrumental in freeing Kāl (Death). Gurū Nānak assured him, however, that it was really God who had spoken through him.¹

71.231 Their next experience was the encounter with the cannibals who were unable to heat their cauldron.² In Miharbān's account it is Mardānā whom the savages try to boil. Following this the Gurū turns a deceitful people to righteousness by causing a harvest to grow without moisture after local śakti practices had failed to produce the necessary rain. Gurū Nānak renamed the country Sādiq and the people, following their rājā's example, all became Sikhs. A dharmśālā was

¹These two gosts (68 and 69) are missing from the Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī Ms. The latter is, like gosts 63 and 64, almost certainly a later addition to the JS and for the same reasons. See supra p. 243, n.1.

²See supra pp. 219-20.

built and the Sikh devotional discipline was adopted.¹

73.235 Next, still in "the south country", they met Sajjan
the thag.² After his exposure and confession his dwelling
was destroyed and a dharmsālā built in its place. This is
followed by a series of unimportant discourses, most of
which are held in wildernesses or different unidentified
cities of the south and none of which add any significant
74.238 details. Gos̥t 74, a discourse with God, is said to have
taken place "in a city of thags in the south country".
75.245 Gos̥t 75 purports to be a discourse held in a desert with
78.255 a certain Rājā Mitr Sain and gos̥t 78 concerns a Rājā Jagan-
83.269 nāth. In gos̥t 83 a storm which kills all the birds in a
grove where Gurū Nānak happened to be sitting prompts a
soliloquy on death. The birds are revived in the following
gos̥t.

This group of south country gos̥ts is followed by another group which are said to have taken place in the city of Ujjain or the area to the south covered by the modern Indore District.³ This is still regarded as dakhan ki

¹The pattern of gos̥t 72 resembles that of gos̥ts 63, 64, and 69 and like them appears to be a later addition. See supra p.243, n.1.

²See supra p. 199.

³Gos̥ts 87-95, pp. 279-315.

dharatī, "the south country". In the second of these, Mardānā's name reappears, having been absent since gost 87.279 72. The first of the Ujjain gosts records a meeting with Bharatharī,¹ but the discourse is with God. Gurū Nānak 88.287 and Mardānā then left the city and "came to Vijhpī where there are elephants".² This provides the setting for Gaurī Aṣṭapadī 2 which in its opening line compares the man to an 89.291 elephant in the jungle which is the human body.³ From there they continued on to the Narabad tīrath where Gurū Nānak conversed with and converted an earnest sannyasī named Chiti Giri.

90.294 After leaving the Narabad they turned north again and on the way back to Ujjain fell among thags who surmised that the Gurū must be a person of much wealth who had disguised himself as a faqīr in order to conceal the fact. The thags of the Purātan's sākhī 22 based a like conclusion upon their conviction that a bright face must indicate a full

¹Cf gost 61, p.200. See supra p. 242.

²Evidently the Vindhya Mountains, as the itinerary set down indicates that the place here referred to lay between Ujjain and the Narabad River. This means that according to Miharbān they were moving south again.

³AG, p.221.

pocket.¹ This appears, however, to be an entirely different story. There is no struggle on a funeral pyre as in the Purātan incident and the bānī differs. In Miharbān's account all that is required to effect the thag's conversion is a recitation of Dhanāsarī Chhant 3.² The genesis of Miharbān's story is obviously connected with the word mūṭharīe which occurs in the first line and which would evoke associations of thagī.³

91.300 Gosṭ 91 contains in its alleged meeting with Bharatharī a common kind of anarchonism and it also provides some unusually specific geographical detail.⁴ The discourse on this occasion is said to have been held with laṅgotībānds,⁵ but Bharatharī is referred to in the introductory portion and appears as a participant during the latter part of the 92-93. conversation. Two more discourses with Bharatharī follow,
303
94-95. then one with God, and finally one with a saṅgat of Sikhs.
310

¹Pur JS, p.32. See supra pp. 203-4.

²AG, pp. 689-90.

³Mūṭhanā: to cheat, plunder, rob.

⁴See infra pp. 314-5.

⁵Celibate sādhus.

- 96.315 Leaving Ujjain Gurū Nānak and Mardānā continued their travels in "the south country" and arrived at an unnamed city. There a discourse was held with the rājā, who had been an associate of the Gurū during the time
- 97.319 of the latter's employment under Daulat Khān. Following this they visited another unidentified city where Gurū
- 98.323 Nānak conversed with gobind lok, and then, in another unspecified location, happened upon a rājā who was busy
- 99.326 worshipping planets. Gosṭ 99 describes the manner in which Gurū Nānak varied his programme. He would walk for several days; then rest for several days; practise austerities for a similar period; and then observe silence for several days.
- 100.331 Their travels brought them next to "the Bīkāner country in Rājputān" and there follows a brief series of gosṭs set in this area.¹ The first occurs in an unnamed town where
- 101.334 Gurū Nānak discoursed with and converted a Vaiṣṇava. This
- 102.336 is followed by another such town and then by Bīkāner City itself, in both of which discourses with gobind lok conclude with conviction and conversion.

¹Gosṭs 100-106, pp. 331-56.

103.339 Leaving the city they passed through a large desert
 with a thinly scattered population and many thags, a
 place where those who escaped the robbers invariably died
 of thirst. Gurū Nānak and Mardānā survived both dangers
 and in the next town the Gurū converted the paṭel and ten
 104.345 or twenty others who had come to meet him. Still in the
 land of the Rājput̃s they came to another town where his
 association with Daulat Khān was well known and where the
 people accordingly flocked for his darśan. In yet another
 105.350 unnamed town he conversed with Vaiṣṇavas and then returned
 106.353 to Bīkāner City where he converted more gobind lok.

107.356 Miharbān's account then takes them south once again,
 for after leaving Bīkāner they enter "the land of Sorāṭhi".
 Mardānā asked the Gurū if this meant they were in the land
 of the Sorāṭhi who was associated with Bīje and received
 an affirmative answer.¹ This would mean that they were
 now in Saurashtra.² The bāṇī given in this setting is a
 misquoted version of the opening ślok of Vār Sorāṭhi:

¹The reference is to one of the famous Rājput̃ cycles.

²MK, p.175.

Soraṭhi tāmi sohāvaṇī je sachā mani hoi.¹

108.358 From here they continued in a southerly direction, entered an arid region (mārū kī dharatī), and stayed there during the monsoon season. Enormous quantities of rain fell, but not sufficient for the porous soil. Observing this, Gurū Nānak uttered a ślok which compared the land's insatiable thirst to his own thirst for the Nām.²

109.360 After this they finally left "the south country" after spending five years there. They travelled north and came to Mathurā where they visited the Keśo Rāi temple and bathed in the Jamnā. After this they proceeded to the eastern part of the town where a large convocation of sādhūs had gathered. After the usual discourse the sādhūs all became Sikhs. The account adds that this group became the Nirāñjanī panth and that they moved to a land in the south beside the sea where they led an itinerant life.³

¹The correct version is:

Soraṭhi sadā sohāvaṇī je sachā mani hoi.
(The rāg) Soraṭh is eternally beautiful if the
true One abides in the heart. AG, p.642.

²Vār Majh, ślok 1 of paurī 23, AG, p.148. See supra p. 74.

³See supra p. 145. The JS is obviously mistaken.

110.365 Gosṭ 110 briefly describes the various people to be seen
 111.368 in Mathurā and gosṭ 111 records a discourse with a
 Vaiṣṇava.

112.371 From Mathurā they moved on to Kurukshetra where a
 festival was in progress and many people were bathing.
 Gurū Nānak's arrival there brought a large crowd, and a
 discourse, in terms of Sorāṭhi 9,¹ on the ineffectiveness

113.374 of their bathing. Finally they arrived back in Sultānpur
 where they received an affectionate welcome from Daulat

114.377 Khān Lodī. Three discourses followed, in the second of
 which Daulat Khān declared that although God was "the
 Master of hearts" no one had ever seen Him and that here

116.383 on earth the title belonged to Gurū Nānak. The Gurū also
 conversed with gobind lok and was acclaimed a pīr by both
 Hindus and Muslims.

117.384 After this interlude in Sultānpur Gurū Nānak set out
 through "the north country" to Mount Sumeru, evidently
 travelling alone. The only place named on his journey there
 is a temple of Durgā referred to simply as Bhagavatī kā

¹AG, p.598.

asthal. Climbing Mount Sumeru Gurū Nānak found all nine Siddhs seated there - Gorakhnāth, Machhendranāth, Īsarnāth, Charapaṭnāth, Baraṅgnāth, Ghoṛācholi, Bālgundāī, Bharatharī, and Gopīchand. When Gorakhnāth asked the identity of the visitor his disciples replied, "This is Nānak Bedī, a pīr and a bhagat who is a householder. Nānak Bedī is a great bhagat." Gorakhnāth then addressed Gurū Nānak, asking him where he was from. The Gurū replied that he had come from Āsā-andesā ("Hope and Fear") and that he dwelt there as a water-fowl floats on water. Gorakhnāth commented that a water-fowl knows all that is taking place along the river and asked him to tell them what was happening in the Kaliyug. Gurū Nānak replied with three śloks, all of them depicting contemporary life as thoroughly degenerate.

Sachi kālu kūrū varatiā kali kākha betāla.....¹

There is a famine of truth, falsehood prevails,
and in the darkness of Kaliyug men have become
ghouls.....

Kali kātī rāje kāsāī dharamu paṅkha kari uḍariā ...²

The Kaliyug is a knife, kings are butchers,
dharam has taken wings and flown.....

¹Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paurī 11, AG p.468.

²Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 16, AG p.145.

Satī pāpu kari satu kamāhi¹

Men give as charity the money they have
acquired by sinful means

The discourse then takes up Vār Rāmakalī, śloks

118-24. 2-7 of paurī 12,² and in the succession of goṣṭs which
392

follows there are quoted other pads and śloks which
imply an audience of Nāths.³

125.413 The series concluded with a discourse in God's
126.416 court, after which Gurū Nānak descended to "this world"
again and journeyed to Gorakh-haṭṭarī. He arrived there
during a mela, conversed with "the yogīs' gurū", and con-
tinued on. No reference is made to any attempt by the
yogīs to overawe him with magic.

127.419 Leaving "the north country", where he had spent one
year, Gurū Nānak entered "the west country" and proceeded
towards Multān. Mardānā reappears in the janam-sākhī at
131.434 this point and a group of Multān goṣṭs follows.⁴ One of

¹Vār Rāmakalī, ślok 1 of paurī 11, AG p.951.

²AG, pp. 952-3. See supra p. 255.

³Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 9, AG pp. 907-8 (goṣṭ 118, pp. 392-8). Vār Sāraṅg, śloks 1 and 2 of paurī 14, AG pp. 1242-3, (goṣṭ 119, pp. 399-400). Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 8, AG p.907 (goṣṭ 120, pp. 401-3). Vār Malār, ślok 2 of paurī 24, AG p. 1289 (goṣṭ 121, pp. 403-5). Āsā 37 and 38, AG pp. 359-60 (goṣṭ 122, pp. 405-9). Rāmakalī 4, AG p. 877 (goṣṭ 123, pp. 409-11). Rāmakalī 5, AG p.877 (goṣṭ 124, pp. 411-13). The last two are said to have been uttered in discourses with Macchen-dranāth in a place called Charapaṭ Vapī.

⁴Goṣṭs 127-34, pp. 419-46.

these was with the grandson of Pīr Bahāuddīn and in the
 132.438 next gost it is recorded that the Gurū visited the pīr's
 tomb where, according to the people's report, he paid
 homage.

135.449 From Multān Gurū Nānak set out on a pilgrimage to
 Mecca. On the way he came to a village which belonged
 to a mullāh and entering the village mosque without remov-
 ing his shoes he lay down with his feet in the direction
 of the Ka'bah. When the mullāh and his congregation entered
 the mosque for the pesī, the second prayer, they discovered
 him lying in this sacrilegious position. The mullāh demanded
 an explanation and the Gurū replied, "Bābā Sāhib, turn my
 shoes in that direction where the house of God will not go.
 Place my shoes in that direction where the Ka'bah is not."
 The mullāh did not accept the challenge. He first performed
 the office and then gave orders for the Gurū to be thrown into
 jail. Gurū Nānak asked for permission to make a single comment
 and when it was granted declared that God alone and not his
 accuser was the true mullāh. He then recited Sirī Rāgu 28:

Soī Maulā jini jagu mauliā hariā kiā sansāro.¹

He is the Mullāh who has caused the world to
 blossom and be verdant.....

¹AG, p.24.

The mullāh, evidently acknowledging defeat, retired to the graveyard and there expired. Mardānā's name is mentioned once during this gost but does not appear again until gost 139.

136.451 Proceeding on from the mullāh's village he met two faqīrs who were going to Mecca and who suggested that they should all travel together. Further on, when they reached a village, the Gurū asked them their names. They informed him that they were called Rahīm and Karīm, and enquired what his name was. When he told them it was Nānak they commented with evident surprise that it sounded like a Hindu name. The Gurū replied that he was indeed a Hindu and when he added that he was a khatri and a Bedī they at last recognised him as the renowned faqīr of Sultānpur fame and became very respectful. When he refused food which the Muslim villagers brought, excusing himself on the grounds that he was fasting, word quickly spread that a great darves had arrived and he was acclaimed by the village.

Next morning they all set out again and on the road the two faqīrs asked him how he, a Hindu, could hope to visit Mecca. He replied that if God so willed then it would come to pass. The faqīrs were carrying paper, pen, and ink, and at

this point they wrote down the date. Gurū Nānak was then transported to Mecca in an instant. His two companions arrived on foot some months later and discovered the Gurū already there. When they asked the local people his date of arrival they were given the very date they had written down and as a result word soon spread in Mecca that a great darveś had arrived. Gurū Nānak remained there for twelve months.

138.461 After having visited Mecca and seen "the west country" Gurū Nānak travelled eastwards to Hinglāj.¹ There the pilgrims were unable to recognise whether he was an atīt, a bairāgī, a Vaiṣṇava, udāsī, Hindu, Muslim, khatrī, brāhmaṇ, sūdra, or vaiśya. They also observed that he seemed to neither sleep, walk, eat, nor drink.

139.463 Continuing on to the east he arrived back in the Pañjāb and passing through Gorakh-haṭarī came to Saidpur. He had spent three years in "the west country" and had seen all of it including Rome, Syria, Kābul, and Peshāwar.² When he

¹The pīth-sthān in the Makrān Coast Range about eighty miles west of the Indus Delta and some twelve miles inland.

²Rome and Syria must be later additions to the JS. The names are found in the later JSs. A recent life of Gurū Nānak, Lāl Singh's Tavarīkh Gurū Khālṣā Panth, adds that while in Rome the Gurū conversed with "the Popes" and denounced their Indulgences as hypocrisy. Loc. cit., vol. i, p.140.

reached Saidpur Mardānā, who suddenly reappears at this point, suggested that they should enter the town to seek alms. This they did and discovered that weddings were being celebrated everywhere. No one, however, paid any attention to them. No food was offered to them, nor any place to rest, and wherever they asked they were ignored or refused. As punishment for its callousness the Gurū called Bābur down upon the town, invoking his coming by the utterance of Tilaṅg 5.¹

As in the Purātan version the pronouncement of the curse came to the knowledge of a certain brāhmaṇ who was a friend of faqīrs. Knowing that God invariably heeds the request of a faqīr he hastened to the Gurū and presenting him with a basket of fruit begged him to be merciful. Gurū Nānak reminded him that the town had inflicted harm on faqīrs, thereby implying that the imminent punishment was merited. The brāhmaṇ, however, was told to take his family and go to a pool out in the waste land at a distance of fifteen kos. Bābur then fell upon the city and all save the brāhmaṇ and his family were massacred. "And so Saidpur was devastated in accordance with the utterance given by

¹AG, pp. 722-3.

the Gurū."

140.466 Next day Gurū Nānak and Mardānā returned to Saidpur and the Gurū commented, "Mardānā, see what has befallen Saidpur Saloī. Behold the will of God in what has taken place." They looked upon Saidpur and there was nothing to be seen. From there they travelled to Tillā Bāl Gundāī. The following day Bābur also arrived there and, in accordance with an implied warning which Gurū Nānak had given the arrogant yogīs, assaulted the village.

141.470 After witnessing the sack of Saidpur and visiting Tillā, Gurū Nānak at last turned towards his home in Talvaṇḍī. They stopped at a distance of two kos from the village and Mardānā asked if he might continue on into the village. Permission was granted on condition that he was not to mention the name of Nānak and that if anyone should ask for news of him he was to give the following answer: "Brother, since the time when Bābā Nānak left Sultānpur we, being separated from him, have continually held his name in remembrance. If anyone knows his whereabouts it is God."

In the village the people showed great respect to him. He went to Kālū's house and prostrated himself before the Gurū's mother. When she and others asked where Nānak was he

replied that he did not know but was looking for him.

After further conversation he departed and the Gurū's mother said to herself, "There is meaning in his having come and then departed again. He has gone to Nānak."

Taking sweets, fruits, and clothing she followed Mardānā out into the jungle called Sāndal Bār and there the re-

142-45. union took place. A series of discourses followed in
474 which both his parents unsuccessfully sought to persuade him to abandon his itinerant way of life and settle in Talvaṇḍī.

147.488 After leaving Talvaṇḍī Gurū Nānak moved south through the Mājha¹ to Pāk Paṭṭan, passing through a number of villages on the way and stopping two kos short of the town. The account of his meeting with Sheikh Kamāl, who was out gathering firewood, and of the first discourse with Sheikh Ibrāhīm is essentially the same as the Purātan's sakhī 32, except that Mardānā appears to be absent in the Miharbān version.² Most of the bānī used is the same and both put Gurū Amar Dās's ślok 104³ into Gurū Nānak's mouth on this occasion. An interesting divergence is Miharbān's quoting

¹The Bārī Doāb between the Rāvī and Satlej rivers.

²See supra p. 210.

³AG, p. 1383.

of Sirī Rāgu 33¹ which in the Purātan janam-sākhī appears in the discourse with Mīā Miṭhā.² In both cases the first couplet is said to have been spoken not by the Gurū, but by the other participant in the discourse. Miharbān extends the meeting with Sheikh Ibrāhīm over two more gosts,
 148-49. 498 but adds only scripture and interpretation.

15.510 From Pāk Paṭṭan Gurū Nānak travelled north to Dīpālpur where a pious merchant presented him with some dried fruit and some mangoes. The Gurū asked him why he was offering fruit from both Khurasān and Hindustān together. The merchant explained that the mangoes were the first of a consignment which had just arrived from Delhi and in order that his business might prosper he wanted Gurū Nānak to be the first to taste them. The raisins had been left by Bābur's army which had been in Dīpālpur and some had been saved for any man of God who might come. Gurū Nānak tried a sample from each and then blessed both the donor and the town, reciting a ślok which is really by Gurū Aṅgad.³ He then proceeded on through

¹AG, p.25.

²Pur JS, p.68.

³Vār Sorāṭhi, ślok 2 of paurī 28, AG p.653.

the areas of Shergarh, Mustafābād, Chuṇiān, Talvaṇḍī, Kaṅganpur, Harī, Kasūr, Rohevāl, Nanier, Bahikīriā, and finally reached Khokhovāl.

152.512 The following gost, which is set in Khokhovāl, relates a series of bizarre incidents, essentially disconnected but very loosely linked by the presence of a brāhmaṇ boy. The language is later and the collection is evidently a subsequent addition.

153.516 Leaving Khokhovāl Gurū Nānak moved on through Kīrīān Paṭhāṇān to Pokho.¹ The area so attracted him that he settled there on the bank of the Rāvī and soon crowds were coming for his darsān. The local official,² however, was sceptical and, as in the Purātan version, set off to imprison the corrupter of Hindus and Muslims. The results were the same, except that the fall came first and blindness second, and that a third effort to proceed on horseback produced a pain in his stomach. When he continued on foot all was well. After his interview he donated some fertile land for a village and built a dharmśālā. Gurū Nānak settled there, naming the place Kartārpur.

¹Pokho dī Randhāvī, or Pakho, on the right bank of the Rāvī, opposite Dehrā Bābā Nānak. Gurū Nānak's father-in-law is said to have lived here before moving to Baṭālā.

²The karorīā, or wealthy man, of the Pur JS, sakhī 40. See supra p.216. The Miharban account also describes him as a karorīā.

At this point Pothī Sach-khaṇḍ concludes.

Summaries

The three best available accounts of the life of Gurū Nānak have now been set out in some detail. Insofar as they include references to specific dates, recognisable places, and people of some significance they may be summarised as follows:

Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1

Gurū Nānak's visit to "all the tīraths"

Mount Sumeru

Mecca

Medīnā

Baghdād

Kartārpur, on the right bank of the Rāvī,

immediately opposite Dehrā Bābā Nānak.

Gurū Aṅgad appointed successor

Achal Baṭālā, four miles south of Baṭālā

in Gurdāspur District

Multān

Kartārpur

The Purātan Janam-sākhī

Gurū Nānak was born in Vaisākh, S. 1526 (AD 1469) in the village of Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī where his father Kālū, a Bedī khatrī, lived. The landlord of the village during his childhood was Rāi Bulār.

At the age of twelve he was married to the daughter of Mūlā, a Choṇā khatrī. Two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand, were subsequently born.

His brother-in-law Jai Rām, the steward of Daulat Khān, invited him to Sultānpur where he was given employment in Daulat Khān's service.

From Sultānpur he left on his first udāsī accompanied by Mardānā, a Ḍūm from Talvaṇḍī. This journey was to the eastern parts of India and included, in the following sequence:

Pāṇīpat (Sheikh Sharaf)

Delhi (Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī)

Banāras

Nānakmatā

Kaurū or Kāvarū, evidently Kāmrup in Assam

(Nur Shāh)

Bisīar, possibly Bashahr in the Simlā Hills

Talvaṇḍī, twelve years after leaving Sultānpur

Pāk Paṭṭan (Sheikh Ibrāhīm)

Goindvāl

Saidpur, or modern Eminābād (Bābur)

Lahore

Kartārpur

His second udāsī. This journey was to the south and the Gurū's companions are variously given as Saido and Gheho; Saido and Sīho; or Saido, Gheho and Sīho.

Ceylon (Rājā Śivanābh)

The third udāsī was to the north. His companions' names are given as Hassū Lohār and Sīhān Chhīmā.

Kashmīr

Mount Sumeru

Achal Baṭālā

The fourth udāsī was to the west. No regular companions are named.

Mecca (Qāzī Rukan-dīn)

The fifth udāsī was a brief one to Gorakh-haṭṭarī, probably the Nāth centre in modern Peshāwar. No companion is named.

Lahinā of Khaḍūr became a disciple, was subsequently renamed Aṅgad, and was eventually designated successor to the office of Gurū

by Gurū Nānak himself.

Gurū Nānak died at Kartarpur on the tenth day of the light half of Asū, S. 1595 (AD 1538).

The Purātan janam-sākhīs also indicate that the Gurū was acquainted with Pīr Bahūddīn of Multān.¹ Two prominent omissions from the places named are Baghdād² and Jagannāth Purī. The only dates of significance which are mentioned are those of his birth and death, and (by obvious implication) that of his marriage which would have been in AD 1481 or 1482. Two which may be added are those of the accession of Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī in 1517³ and Bābur's sack of Saidpur in 1520.⁴ This at once involves a contradiction, as Gurū Nānak is said to have returned to Talvaṇḍī twelve years after the udāsī began,⁵ and the udāsī is said to have begun after

¹The IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folio 53, includes a discourse with Bahāuddīn's grandson (potā), not with Bahāuddīn himself. The grandson's name is given as Rukandīn. Miharbān, who also has such a discourse, does not name the grandson, referring to him simply as 'Pīr Bahāvādī dā potā' or as 'Pīrzādā'. (Gos̄t 131, p. 434. See supra p.256). In the Colebrooke and Hafizabad MSS Rukandīn is the name of the Mecca qāzī who sought to drag Gurū Nānak's feet away from the direction of the Ka'bah. See supra p. 223.

²The IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folio 200, includes a sākhī describing a discourse held in Baghdād. The other participant's name is given as Sheikh Sharaf.

³Sākhī 15. See supra p. 200.

⁴Sākhī 35. See supra p. 211.

⁵Pur JS, p.48.

the occasion of Gurū Nānak's meeting with Ibrāhīm Lodī in Delhi.¹ One of the dates must be rejected forthwith and of the two incidents the one which has the greater claims to probability is obviously the Saidpur visit. The Delhi sākhī can have no claims whatsoever and accordingly the 1517 date may be summarily eliminated.

The Miharbān Janam-sākhī

Gurū Nānak was born in Vaisakh, S. 1526 (AD 1469), the son of Kālū, a Bedī khatri, and Tiparā. The place where the birth took place is variously said to have been the village of Chāhalāvāle and Kālū's village, Rāi Bhoā kī Talvaṇḍī. The name of the contemporary landlord of the latter village is given as Rāi Bhoā.

Shortly after reaching the age of sixteen Gurū Nānak was married in Baḷālā to Ghumī, the daughter of Mūlā, a Choṇā khatri of Baḷālā. Two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand, were born when he was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age.

At the age of thirty-five years, six and a half months, he went to Sultānpur in response to an invitation from his brother-in-law Jai Rām, an Uppal khatri and steward of Daulat Khān Lodī. There he was given employment in Daulat Khān's commissariat.

¹Pur JS, p.25.

After two years in Sultānpur he left on his first udāsī, accompanied by Mardānā. This journey was to the east of India and then from there to the far south. It included the following places:

Delhi (Salīm Shāh Paṭhāp)

Hardwār

Allahābād

Banāras

Hājīpur Paṭṭā

Ayodhyā

Jagannāth Purī

Rāmeshwaram

Ujjain (Rājā Bharatharī)

Vindhya Mountains

Narabad River

Ujjain

Bīkāner

Saurashtra

Mathurā

Kurukshetra

Sultānpur (Daulat Khān Lodī)

The second udāsī was to the north and then to the west.

Mount Sumeru

Gorakh-haṭṭarī

Multān (the grandson of Pīr Bahāuddīn)

Mecca

Hiṅglāj

Gorakh-haṭṭarī

Saidpur

Tilla

Talvaṇḍī

Pāk Paṭṭan (Sheikh Ibrāhīm)

Dīpālpur

Khokhovāl

Pokho and Kartārpur

In Miharbān's account the notable omissions are Kāmṛūp, Ceylon and Baghdād. Nānakmatā is also missing. The significant dates, stated or plainly implied, are the Gurū's birth in S. 1526 (AD 1469), his marriage (AD 1485), his move from Talvaṇḍī to Sultānpur (AD 1504), and his departure from there on his first udāsī (AD 1506). To these may be added the date of the attack on Saidpur (AD 1520) which means that according to Miharbān's account all of Gurū Nānak's travels outside the Pañjāb took place

within the space of fourteen years and between the ages of thirty-seven and fifty-three. The period spent in "the east country" was three years, in the south five years, in the north one year, and in the west three years, a total of twelve years. This leaves a balance of two years to be allocated to the initial journey from Sultānpur to "the east country" and the gap between the departure from "the south country" and the commencement of the second udāsī. The pattern would then be as follows:

From Sultānpur to "the east country"	1506-7
Travels in "the east country"	1507-10
Travels in "the south country"	1510-15
The journey from "the south country"	
to "the north country" via Sultānpur	1515-16
Travels in "the north country"	1516-17
Travels in "the west country"	1517-20

The Criteria

These are the three accounts which provide practically all of the material available for a reconstruction of the life of Gurū Nānak. None of them can be accepted as it stands and our task must now be to seek and apply means of identifying what may be affirmed, what must be rejected, and what falls between the two. There is

obviously much that must be rejected as impossible and in contrast there is regrettably little which may be accepted without reserve. Some of the remaining material may be regarded as probable, but considerably more of it must be classified as unlikely. Finally, there is a certain amount from which we must withhold judgment, material which records what is inherently possible, but for which there is no support other than that offered by the janam-sākhīs themselves.

We have here five categories which we may designate the established, the probable, the possible, the improbable, and the impossible. Into these five we must strive to fit the manifold traditions concerning the life of Gurū Nānak. In order to do so it is first necessary to determine the criteria which should be used.

The first criterion, and one which enables us to discard substantial portions of both the Purāṭan and Miharbān accounts, is the incidence of the miraculous or plainly fantastic. It is, however, one which must be used with some caution. The inclusion of a miracle does not necessarily mean that the whole sākhī must be rejected. In most cases this is required, but in others the possibility of a substratum of truth must be borne in mind.

A second criterion is the testimony of external sources. In most cases where this criterion applies to the janam-sākhī

accounts of Gurū Nānak's life it demands a negative judgment. The two important exceptions are the incidents involving Daulat Khān Lodī and the Emperor Bābur. There is also an inscription in Baghdād which requires careful consideration.

A third criterion which may be used is Gurū Nānak's own work as recorded in the Ādi Granth. This too offers us disappointingly little help for, as we have already noted, explicit references to his life are entirely absent and implicit hints are few. The most important of these concern the connection with Bābur and Gurū Nānak's relationships with Nāth yogīs. In other cases the help which his works offer us is generally negative. Occasionally it is possible to reject an incident because it is conspicuously out of accord with clearly stated doctrines or with the personality which emerges from his works as a whole.

A fourth criterion is the measure of agreement or, conversely, disagreement which we find in the different janam-sākhīs. This alone can rarely determine a particular issue, but in some cases it should certainly influence our judgment. One such instance is the story of Sajjan the thag.

In cases where there is disagreement between the different janam-sākhīs, or where only one janam-sākhī records a particular detail or incident, a fifth criterion is the relative reliability of the different janam-sākhīs. This criterion is of little use in

issues which concern only the Purātan and Miharbān janam-sākhīs or Var 1, but it certainly applies whenever the more recent janam-sākhīs enter the discussion. In general the testimony of the three older sources must be preferred to that of either the Gyān-ratanāvalī or the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs. Any point which occurs only in the Bhāī Bālā accounts must be regarded as strongly suspect.

Finally, there is a geographical criterion in the sense that a greater degree of confidence can be placed in details relating to Gurū Nānak's life within the Pañjāb than to those which concern his travels beyond the province. This applies particularly to his later years. The accounts of his childhood are all heavily charged with legend, but there is much that rings true in the brief accounts given of his Kartārpur period. This is to be expected, for the janam-sākhīs we are using must have emerged at a remove of only one or two generations from Gurū Nānak's death.

There is also a marked contrast between the geographical exactitude which characterises the janam-sākhī accounts of his movements within the Pañjāb and the vagueness of those which describe his travels elsewhere. In the latter case the place names are almost all either well-known capitals and centres of pilgrimage or they are unidentifiable and evidently non-existent places such as 'Dhanāsarī'. Many of the sākhīs which describe incidents which

occurred during his udāsīs are unlocated or are said to have taken place in "a certain city" or "a certain country". A high proportion are placed in deserts or jungles and a number are said to have occurred on islands in the ocean. The incidence of the fantastic is particularly high in these latter cases. All sākhīs with indefinite oceanic settings must be regarded with marked scepticism.

The vagueness also emerges in such details as the names of Gurū Nānak's associates. In the case of the Purāṭan's southern udāsī the manuscripts disagree not just between themselves but also within their own individual accounts.¹ There is the same evident uncertainty in the names of the people with whom Gurū Nānak is said to have conversed. Discourses with Sheikh Farīd, Sheikh Sharaf, and Pīr Bahāuddīn are anachronisms, but the names are at least those of real people, each of whom would have left a line of spiritual successors. This is more than can be said for such names as Nūr Shāh, Khwājā Khizar, and the nine or eighty-four Siddhs. Such vagueness need not necessarily demand a definite rejection of a particular sākhī, but it must certainly weaken its claims to authenticity.

¹See supra pp. 218-9.

A synopsis of the janam-sākhī traditions concerning the life of
Gurū Nānak

These are the six principal criteria which will be used in this effort to reconstruct the life of Gurū Nānak. Before proceeding to do so, however, it will be convenient to set out, in the form of a chart, a conspectus of the various sākhīs which have been used in Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1 and the Purātan and Miharbān janam-sākhīs, together with the corresponding sākhīs from the Gyān-ratanāvalī and Bhāī Bālā versions. To these have been added a few sākhīs which do not appear in either the Purātan or Miharbān janam-sākhīs, but which are included in most modern biographies of Gurū Nānak. A column has also been added to indicate which of the sākhīs have been used by Macauliffe in The Sikh Religion. Macauliffe's account is generally based upon the Purātan janam-sākhīs, but the author added several other incidents, mainly from the Bhāī Bālā tradition, and in most cases he expanded the Purātan account with material drawn from Bhāī Bālā sources. Occasionally he used the Gyān-ratanāvalī in the same way and added anything extra which was to be found in Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1.

For this chart the Miharbān Janam-sākhī has been taken as the standard and the individual sākhīs are listed in the order in which they occur in that janam-sākhī. Sākhīs which do not appear in the Miharbān version, but which include a specific chronological indication

have been inserted in their appropriate places. Other sākhīs are listed as 'Miscellaneous sākhīs'. Each figure indicates the number of the relevant sākhī, gost, or paurī in the janam-sākhī under which it is listed, and the numbers given under 'Macauliffe' are those of the appropriate page numbers in volume 1 of The Sikh Religion. The numbers which appear consecutively in the first column have been added by the writer for ease of reference in the discussion which follows.

The edition of the Gyān-ratanāvalī which has been used is the one which was lithographed in Lahore by Charāguddīn and Sarā-juddīn in AD 1891. Sākhīs included in that edition which have obviously been taken from the Bhāī Bālā tradition have been bracketed.

Three editions of the Bhāī Bālā version have been included in the chart. These are: (a) the Hāfaz Kutub Dīn edition, lithographed in AD 1871, which generally follows the India Office Library manuscript Panj. B41 and the British Museum manuscript Or. 2754. I; (b) the expanded 1871 edition lithographed by Dīvān Būṛā Singh, Lahore; and (c) a modern version published by Munshī Gulāb Singh and Sons of Lahore in AD 1942. Sākhīs have been listed under the third of these only if they do not appear in either of the 1871 editions. Numbers listed under (a) which are bracketed indicate sākhīs which have been taken direct from the Purātan tradition and do not appear in the India Office Library or British Museum manuscripts.

An error has been made in the indexing of (b), the expanded 1871 edition, as a result of which the numbers 165-174 inclusive have been used twice in allocating consecutive numbers to sākhīs. In the chart such sākhīs are distinguished by the use of either (1) or (2).

It must be emphasised that although most sākhīs appear in the chart under more than one source, the different versions normally give differing accounts of the same incident. Occasionally the differences are such as to destroy practically all resemblances between two accounts.

Sakhī	Mih JS	Pur JS	Var 1	GR	Bhai Bālā			Macauliffe
					a	b	c	
1. Birth of Gurū Nānak	4	1		27	2	2		1
2. Recitation of <u>Sapat Slokī Gītā</u>				(31)		2		
3. Instruction by the paṇḍit	5	2		33-4	3	3		2
4. Instruction by the mullāh	6	3		45		4		11
5. Investiture with the <u>janeū</u>	7			44		5		16
6. The restored field	8	4		46-7		6		15
7. The tree's stationary shadow	9	5		48	4	7		19
8. The cobra's shadow					4	8		19
9. Marriage of Jai Rām and Nānakī					7	13		18
10. Betrothal and marriage	11-12	3		50	11-12	17-18		18
11. The <u>vaid</u> convinced	15-16	7		48		11		26
12. The true field	17							
13. The true merchandise	22	6		49		10		23
14. Birth of Lakhmī Dās & Sirī Chand	22	5		51	13	20,25		29

<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Vār l	GR	Bhai Bālā			Macaul- iffe
					a	b	c	
15. The true harvest	23	6		49		10		21
16. <u>Khara sauda</u> : the feeding of Sant Ren and the faqirs					6	12		30
17. The <u>lotā</u> and ring presented to a faqir					8	14		32
18. Bhāgīrath and Mansukh		41		52		19		145
19. Mansukh and Rājā Śivanābh		41		82		27		146
20. To Sultānpur	24	8		53	9	15		32
21. Work in Daulat Khān's commissariat	25-27	9		54	10	16		33
22. Immersion in the river: his call	28-29	10		56	13	21-3		33
23. Nānak accused of embezzlement					10	25		42
24. The mullāh seeks to exorcise his evil spirit					15	27		36
25. Discourse with the qāzī	30-32	11		57-8	15	28-29		37
26. Departure from Sultānpur	34	11		61	16	34		43
27. Mardānā commanded to throw offerings away	35	12				176		44

<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Vār l	GR	<u>Bhai Bālā</u>			Macaul- iffe
					a	b	c	
28. Mardānā eats the forbidden fruit	36	30			24	177		94
29. Nānak cooks meat at Kurukshetra				(62)	71	249		47
30. Discourse with Sheikh Sharaf of Pāṇipat		14		65	(66)			52
31. Delhi: the real alms	38							
32. Delhi: the sultan's elephant resurrected		15		66-8		236		56
33. Sheikh Bajīd		16						58
34. Hardwar: the watering of his fields	39-40			71			81	50
35. Mount Govardhan, Mathurā, and Brindaban				(69-70)		251-2		57
36. Nānakmata		18		72	23	90		59
37. Allahābād	43							
38. Banāras: discourses with papāits	44-50			74		253		
39. Banāras: discourse with Chatur Dās		17				196		61

Sakhī	Mih JS	Pur JS	Var l	GR	Bhaī Bālā			Macaul- iffe
					a	b	c	
40. Rājā Harināth	51							
41. Meeting with Kabīr	52							
42. Hājipur Patṇā	54			77				
43. Ayodhyā: discourse with "all the bhagats"	59-60							
44. Ayodhyā: discourse with paṇḍits				(75)	255			
45. Gayā				(76)	254			
46. The country ruled by women		23		84	(25)	170(1)		73
47. Dacca					24			
48. Jagannāth Purī	61			78-9	254			81
49. The brick falls from the temple	62							
50. The jackal and the food from God's court	63							
51. The bhagats revealed in the stars	64							
52. Rameshwaram	65-66				60	(158 (227		
53. The Yogi of Jāpāpataṇ (Jaffnā)				85-6				

Sakhī	Mih JS	Pur JS	Var l	GR	Bhai Bala			Macauley
					a	b	c	
54. Ceylon: Rājā Sivanābh and the Pran Saṅgalī		47		87-91	29	169(1)		154
55. A girl turned into a boy				(92-94)		173-4 (1)		
56. The meeting with <u>Kaliyug</u>	68	24		81	(26)	165(2)		78
57. The struggle with <u>Kāl</u>	69							
58. The cannibals' cauldron	71	44		83	30	72-3		152
59. A deceitful people turned to righteousness	72							
60. Sajjan the <u>thag</u>	73	13		73	63	239		45
61. Rājā Mitr Sain	75							
62. Rājā Jagannāth	78							
63. Ujjain	87,91-5							
64. Vindhya Mountains	88							
65. Narabad <u>tīrath</u>	89							
66. Bikaner district and city	100-106			108				

<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Vār 1	GR	Bhaī Bālā			Macaul- iffe
					a	b	c	
67. The land of Sorāṭhi (Saurashtra)	107							
68. Mathurā	109-11							
69. Kurukshetra: discourse on bathing	112							
70. Return to Sultānpur	113-16							
71. The Kashmīrī paṇḍit		49		(114)	(75)	217		163
72. Mount Sumeru	117-25	50	28-31	(139- 42)	43-8	111- 37		169
73. Gorakh-haṭṭarī	126	52						172
74. Multān	127-34							
75. The mullāh's village	135							
76. Rahīm and Karīm	136							
77. The Mecca pilgrim and the following cloud		51		156				174
78. Mecca: Gurū Nānak's miraculous arrival	136							
79. Mecca: the moving mosque		51	32-4	157	(39)	104		175

	<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Var l	GR	<u>Bhāī Bālā</u>			Macaul- iffe
						a	b	c	
80.	Medīnā				(164)	40	106-8		179
81.	Baghdād			35-6	161-3		228-31		179
82.	Hinglāj	138							
83.	The sack of Saidpur	139	35		(112)		470		109
84.	Discourse with Bābur		35		(112)	73	470		113
85.	Bābur attacks Tilla	140							
86.	Return to Talvaṇḍī and reunion with parents	141-45	31		110			101	95
87.	Pāk Pajjan: discourse with Sheikh Ibrahim	147-49	32		(36-37 (180)	83	258		101
88.	The merchant of Dīpālpur	151							
89.	The wealthy man humbled: the founding of Kartarpur	153	40		148-51		55		131
90.	Achal Bajālā: discourse with the Siddhs		50	39-44	170-7	61			157
91.	Multān: the jasmin petal			44	178		233		180

<u>Sākhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Vār l	GR	<u>Bhai Bālā</u>			Macauley- iffé
					a	b	c	
92. First meeting with Lahīṇā		53		169	86	271		182
93. Lahīṇā's clothes ruined		53			86	271		
94. Lahīṇā commanded to eat the corpse		54			86	279		183
95. Lahīṇā becomes Aṅgad		54			86	271		185
96. Death of Makḥdūm Bahāuddīn		55						186
97. Death of Mardānā				208				181
98. Death of Kālū and Tiparā				216-7		290		
99. The installation of Gurū Aṅgad		56	45	218	86	293		187
100. The death of Gurū Nanak		57		219	89-90	295-300		188
<u>Miscellaneous sākhīs</u>								
101. The death of the trader's infant son		19				68		65
102. A watchman receives royal authority		20				160-1		68
103. The coal and the thorn		21						68

<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Var l	GR	<u>Bhai Bālā</u>			Macauliffe
					a	b	c	
104. The <u>thags</u> and the funeral pyre		22		120		198		71
105. <u>Kīr nagar</u> : the city of insects		25			(27)	376		
106. The inhospitable village unmolested		26						80
107. The hospitable village dispersed		27						81
108. The meeting with Sheikh Farīd in Asa Des		28			(28)			84
109. Jhaṇḍā Bāghī and the <u>Jugāvalī</u>		29			34	170(2)		93
110. The leprous faqīr		33				202		107
111. The devotees of Kīrīan Paṭhāṇ		34						108
112. Discourse with Mīa Mīṭhā		36				171(2)		123
113. Dunī Chand and the wolf		37			(74)	62		129
114. Dunī Chand's flags		37			(74)	62		130
115. The brāhmaṇ's cooking square		38						132
116. A pious boy		39				168(2)		133
117. The meeting with Khwaja Khizar		42				172(2)		147

<u>Sakhī</u>	Mih JS	Pur JS	Vār I	GR	<u>Bhai Bala</u>			Macaul- iffe
					a	b	c	
118. Anabhi the Jain		43						150
119. The meeting with Makhdūm Bahāuddīn		45						153
120. The destruction of the hospitable carpenter's hut		48				167(2)		
121. Sālas Rāi				(99-107)	31	74-75		
122. Pañjā Sahib: the rock stopped							147	171
123. Discourse with Abdul Rahman of Irān				(119)		(193 (259-60		
124. Saidpur: Lālo and Bhāgo					19-20	47		43

Sākhīs which must be rejected

Of the sākhīs listed in the chart many may be treated in summary manner. A substantial proportion can be discarded at once, most of them in accordance with the first criterion, and many more must be relegated to the "possible" category. The following may be rejected on the grounds that they are miracle stories without any features which suggest a substratum of truth:

2. Recitation of Sapat Slokī Gītā
6. The restored field
7. The tree's stationary shadow
8. The cobra's shadow
23. Nānak accused of embezzlement
28. Mardānā eats the forbidden fruit
50. The jackal and the food from God's court
51. The bhagats revealed in the stars
53. The yogī of Jāpāpaṭaṇ
55. A girl turned into a boy
56. The meeting with Kaliyug
57. The struggle with Kāl
59. A deceitful people turned to righteousness
77. The Mecca pilgrim and the following cloud
78. Mecca: Gurū Nānak's miraculous arrival
94. Lahīṇā commanded to eat the corpse

- 104. The thags and the funeral pyre
- 105. The city of insects
- 110. The leprous faqīr
- 113. Dunī Chand and the wolf
- 115. The brāhmaṇ's cooking square
- 117. The meeting with Khwājā Khizar
- 119. The meeting with Makhdūm Bahāuddīn
- 120. The destruction of the hospitable carpenter's hut
- 122. Pañjā Sāhib: the rock stopped

Several of these do not appear in the Vār or in either of the older janam-sākhī traditions, but have been included here either on account of their prominence in popular biographies of Gurū Nānak or because they provide illustrations of Bhāī Bālā material incorporated in the 1891 edition of the Gyān-ratanāvalī. One which is accorded particular popularity in modern accounts is number 122, the story of how Gurū Nānak stopped a falling boulder at Pañjā Sāhib.

The story relates that the Gurū once visited Hasan Abdāl, a village in Attock District between Rāwalpīṇḍī and Peshāwar.¹ At the top of a nearby hill there lived a Muslim darveś called Bāwā

¹It is within the area of ancient remains which surrounds the site of Taxila. Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. XIII, p.70.

Vālī Kandhārī. Water issued from a spring at the summit, but none was available at its foot and Mardānā was accordingly sent up to draw some. Bāwā Vālī had, however, heard of the Gurū's reputation and, piqued by jealousy, he refused access to Mardānā, suggesting that if his master was such a great faqīr he should provide his own water-supply. A subsequent request elicited a similar reply and so the Gurū proceeded to act in accordance with Bāwā Vālī's sarcastic advice. He caused a spring to open at the foot of the hill, whereupon the spring at the summit immediately ceased to flow. Seeing this, the enraged Bāwā Vālī rolled a huge rock down upon the Gurū. The mighty boulder failed, however, to reach its mark for Gurū Nānak raised his hand and instantly terminated its headlong flight. An impression of his hand was left on the rock and it is for this reason that the place is known as Pañjā Sāhib or the Holy Palm. Some accounts also claim that the flow of water in the spring greatly increased.¹

The Sikh story concerning Hasan Abdāl is the latest in a line which has successively produced Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim legends. General Cunningham identified the tank which is filled by the spring with that of the Nāga or Serpent King Elāpatra visited by Hsüan Tsang in AD 630.² G. B. Scott, who visited the site, re-

¹ Sewārām Singh, The Divine Master, p.159.

² Archaeological Survey of India, Report of 1863-4, Vol. ii, pp. 135-6.

ported that there is indeed a hand-mark on a rock near the spring, but that it projects in relief, instead of being recessed into the rock.¹ Kartār Singh states that the rock has since been removed to make room for a road and some buildings.²

To the twenty-five sākhīs listed above the following three must, for all practical purposes, be added:

3. Instruction by the pandit
4. Instruction by the mullāh
5. Investiture with the janeū

The recitation of pads on these three occasions obviously falls within the category of miracle stories. It is quite possible that Gurū Nānak was instructed by a pandit and a mullāh during his childhood, and that at the appropriate age he was invested with the sacred thread, but there seems to be little doubt that these incidents, like so many others, were introduced in order to provide settings for the pads. Moreover, the information they offer adds nothing to what we already know about Gurū Nānak. His works are not those of an illiterate or semi-literate person³ and we may assume that his parents

¹G. B. Scott, Religion and Short History of the Sikhs 1469-1930, p.19. See also Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi District 1893-4, pp. 35-6.

²Kartār Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, p. 221.

³The accusation has, however, been made. Cf R. C. Śukl, Hindī Sāhitya kā Itihās (11th edition), p.78.

would have followed normal practices as far as the sacred thread was concerned.

58. The cannibals' cauldron

The story of the cannibals' efforts to boil Mardānā, or, as in the Purātan version,¹ Gurū Nānak himself is one of the miracle stories which, as we have already noted, shows evident signs of having evolved out of a reference in a particular pad, in this case a pad which is by Gurū Arjan and not by Gurū Nānak.² It may be argued that, even if the story of the recalcitrant cauldron is to be rejected as legendary, there still remains a possibility that Gurū Nānak, at some stage in his travels, encountered some savages. The possibility does indeed exist, but this sākhī cannot be accepted as evidence of such an encounter. The connection between the karāhā, or cauldron, used by the cannibals, and the occurrence of the same word in Gurū Arjan's Mārū 14 offers a much more likely explanation for the whole sākhī. The fact that the incident is set outside the Pañjāb and, in the case of the Purātan and Bhāi Bālā versions, on "an island in the ocean"³ further weakens any claims the sākhī may

¹Pur JS, sākhī 44, p.81.

²See supra pp. 72-3.

³Pur JS, p.81. BB JS, p.123.

have had to an element of authenticity.

108. The meeting with Sheikh Farīd in Āsā Deś

There is good reason to accept as at least probable the tradition that Gurū Nānak met the contemporary successor of Sheikh Farīd, but this sākhī which describes a meeting with Farīd himself is of an entirely different order. As recorded in the Purātan janam-sākhīs it recounts two impossible stories set in the non-existent land of Āsā. To these two legends has been added the story of how Sheikh Farīd used to carry a wooden chapātī as an excuse for refusing people who offered him food and so threatened to upset his ascetic discipline. This story evidently does belong to the traditions which have gathered around Sheikh Farīd,¹ but its inclusion in this sākhī does nothing to suggest that there can be any element of historicity in the janam-sākhī incident. On the contrary, it emphasises its legendary nature, for it indicates that the person concerned is the original Farīd, who died in 1265, and not one of his successors.

The sākhīs considered so far have all been rejected on the basis of their almost exclusively miraculous or manifestly fictitious content. Others may be similarly discarded in accordance with our

¹Cf śloka 28, AG p. 1379.

second criterion, the testimony of external sources. This group comprises the following six sākhis:

31. Delhi: the real alms
32. Delhi: the sultan's elephant resurrected

Both of these are set in Delhi and both must be rejected on historical grounds. The first of them, which is to be found only in the Miharbān Janam-sākhi, is wide of the historical mark in that it names Salem Shāh Paṭhān as the contemporary sultan of Delhi. The reference is obviously to Jalāl Khān, the second son and successor of Sher Shāh, who adopted the regnal name of Islām Shāh but who is referred to by several of the contemporary chroniclers as Salīm Shāh.¹ Islām Shāh's reign did not begin until 1545, six or seven years after the death of Gurū Nānak. The sākhi contains nothing else except the customary discourse and must accordingly be rejected.

The substance of the second Delhi sākhi consists of a miracle story which must be repudiated as such, but this still leaves open the possibility of a meeting with the sultan. In this case the sultan's name is given as Brahamu Beg in the Colebrooke manuscript and Ibrāhīm Beg in the Hāfizābād manuscript.² The name

¹M. A. Rahīm, History of the Afghans in India, p. 62 n.1.

²The GR relates the incident without mentioning the sultan's name (sākhis 66-68, pp. 187-94).

is clearly intended to be that Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī (1517-26) which means that in this particular instance the Purātan tradition comes nearer to historical possibility than Miharbān's account. It is not, however, near enough for, as we have already observed,¹ it is impossible to accept a visit to Delhi at a date later than Ibrāhīm Lodī's accession in 1517 without upsetting the complete pattern of the first udāsī. Were there any inherent probability in the substance of the sākhī it would constitute a sufficient reason for calling that pattern in question forthwith. The substance is, however, plainly impossible and accordingly the sākhī may be rejected.

43. Ayodhyā: discourse with "all the bhagats"

This sākhī, which describes a meeting with Nāmdev, Jaidev, Kabīr, Trilochan, Raidās, Saiṇ, Sadhnā, Dhannā, and Beṇī, can be excluded for the obvious reason that there can be no possibility of bhagats from different centuries and different parts of India ever having gathered in the same place at the same time. Nāmdev, Jaidev, and Trilochan all died well before the birth of Gurū Nānak and the same almost certainly applies to Saiṇ, Sadhnā and Beṇī also.

¹See supra p. 268.

The sākhī has obviously been developed out of the bhagat bānī of the Ādi Granth.¹

70. Return to Sultānpur

Miharbān records that after returning from the south Gurū Nānak passed through Sultānpur where he renewed his acquaintance with Daulat Khān Lodī. The incident is set in the context of the Gurū's udāsīs and, regardless of which pattern is accepted for his travels, it is clear that by this stage Daulat Khān Lodī would have been living in Lahore, not in Sultānpur. The sūbah of Lahore was assigned to Daulat Khān in or about 1500² which would certainly be before Gurū Nānak could have returned to the Pañjāb had he followed the itinerary laid down by either Miharbān or the Purātan janam-sākhīs. Accordingly to Miharbān's chronology this return visit would have taken place in 1516.³ It is perhaps conceivable that Daulat Khān may have happened to be back in Sultānpur on a visit, but the possibility is remote. Moreover, the tradition is a weak one. It appears only in Miharbān's account.

¹See Appendix 1, p. 609.

²See infra p. 353.

³See supra p. 271.

30. Discourse with Sheikh Sharaf of Pāṇīpat

96. Death of Makhdūm Bahāuddīn

The first of these describes a discourse with Sheikh Sharaf, the Pīr of Pāṇīpat, and the second an exchange of messages between Gurū Nānak and Sheikh Bahāuddīn of Multān shortly before their deaths. Both of these famous Muslim pīrs died well before the time of Gurū Nānak.¹ It may be argued that the contacts must have been with successors of the two pīrs,² but this is not what the janam-sākhīs say. Had the names of the contemporary successors been known they would certainly have been given, for this has been done in the case of Farīd's successor, Sheikh Ibrāhīm.³ A much more likely explanation is the natural tendency to introduce an association with the acknowledged great in order that the object of the writer's belief or affection may be shown to be even greater. This factor doubtless applies also in the case of no. 85, the discourse with Bābur,⁴ and in that of no. 108, the discourse with Sheikh Farīd.⁵ In the case of Farīd the janam-sākhīs present two

¹ Sheikh Sharaf is said to have died in AD 1324 and Sheikh Bahāuddīn in AD 1170. T. W. Beale, An Oriental Biographical Dictionary, pp. 17, 97.

² This is Macauliffe's interpretation. The Sikh Religion, i.52, 186. Cf also i.153.

³ See infra pp. 424-5.

⁴ See infra pp. 420-1.

⁵ See supra p. 294. Other examples are nos. 41 and 43.

irreconcilable traditions. No. 108, which names Farīd himself as the person with whom the Gurū conversed, is clearly spurious, whereas no. 87, which specifies Sheikh Ibrāhīm, has good claims to at least a measure of authenticity.

This must lead us to reject these two sākhīs for they evidently correspond to no. 108 rather than to no. 87. This is not to deny, however, that Gurū Nānak must have had contacts with some of his more prominent religious contemporaries, and nor does it necessarily mean that the successors of these two pīrs could not have been amongst these contemporaries whom the Gurū would have met. The point is that these two sākhīs do not provide us with evidence of such contacts.

101. The death of the trader's infant son

103. The coal and the thorn

These two sākhīs may be discarded in accordance with our third criterion, for both are in evident conflict with what we know of Gurū Nānak's personality and beliefs from his works. The first of them records how the Gurū greeted the prospect of a baby's imminent death not merely with equanimity, but with apparent mirth, a description which is in sharp conflict with the character which emerges from his bānī. The purpose in this case is clearly to show the fate of those who, like the infant's father, spurn the Gurū,

but the illustration is an unfortunate one. The second of the sākhīs is based upon a naive understanding of the doctrine of karam which would certainly not have accorded with Gurū Nānak's concept. The incident is clearly spurious.

Improbable sākhīs

From the impossible we move to the improbable and here too there are several sākhīs which can be relegated without lengthy analyses.

11. The vaid convinced
12. The true field
13. The true merchandise
15. The true harvest

These four sākhīs are all set in the context of the Gurū's early life in Talvaṇḍī. None of them can be dismissed as absolutely impossible, but there can be little doubt that all four are examples of episodes which evolved as appropriate settings for certain pads or śloks. The janam-sākhīs' own claim that the pads and śloks were uttered in response to the situations which provide the settings assumes a quality of spontaneity which is difficult to accept, even in a poet as talented as Gurū Nānak.

16. Kharā saudā: the feeding of Sant Ren and the faqīrs

17. The loṭā and ring presented to a faqīr

The two stories which concern gifts made by Gurū Nānak to faqīrs are also set in the period of his early manhood, but it is obvious that they have not developed out of pads or śloks in the manner of the previous four sākhīs. These two are narratives, not mere settings, and they are in no way dependent upon extracts from Gurū Nānak's works. Moreover, the stories which they relate, far from seeming intrinsically unlikely, sound like the kind of incidents which might well have occurred in the life of a young man of pronounced religious inclinations.¹

There is, however, a serious objection to both of them. Both are to be found only in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs. Had the stories been current at the time when the Miharbān and Purātan accounts took shape it is highly unlikely that either, much less both, would have omitted them, particularly such an interesting incident as Kharā saudā dī sākhī. The conclusion indicated by their omission is that the two sākhīs represent a relatively late tradition. This cannot be established beyond all doubt, but it is certainly a strong likelihood and the fact that the Gyān-ratanāvalī also omits them strengthens it. The two sākhīs must accordingly be regarded as improbable.

¹Both stories are related in Macauliffe, i.30-32.

The same argument applies to the following six sakhīs:

- 29. Nānak cooks meat at Kurukshetra
- 35. Mount Govardhan, Mathurā, and Brindāban
- 44. Ayodhyā: discourse with paṇḍits
- 45. Gayā
- 121. Sālas Rāi
- 123. Discourse with Abdul Rahmān of Īrān

All of these, unlike numbers 16 and 17, do appear in the 1891 edition of the Gyān-ratanāvalī, but all are clearly borrowings from the Bhāi Bālā tradition.¹ The first of them, no. 29, appears to be a case of a situation evolving in order to provide an appropriate setting for a particular extract from Gurū Nānak's works, the portion in this case being Vār Malār, śloks 1 and 2 of paurī 25.² Nos. 44 and 45 give precisely the kind of place one would expect the popular imagination to add to the story of Gurū Nānak's travels. Both Ayodhyā and Gayā are among the seven sacred cities and their

¹See supra pp. 165-6.

²AG, pp. 1289-90. There are interesting divergences with regard to the meat which Gurū Nānak is said to have cooked. The three Bhāi Bālā MSS in London all give goat. (IO Library Ms B41, folio 206b; BM Ms Or. 2754.I, folio 198a; and SOAS Ms 104975, folio 218a). The 1871 lithographed edition, which follows the IO Library and BM MSS, reproduces exactly the same wording, but replaces bakarī (goat) with machhī (fish). (BB JS, p.314.) The Divān Būṭa Singh expanded 1871 version, p.534, gives mirag (venison) and this is followed by the corresponding sakhī which has been interpolated in the GR (p. 135)

eventual inclusion within Gurū Nānak's itinerary is altogether natural.

The story of Sālas Rāi, the jeweller of Biṣambarpur who was converted by Gurū Nānak, is one which might well be classified with the categorically rejected. It includes elements of the miraculous¹ and it is set in a city which cannot be satisfactorily identified. Kānh Singh regards Biṣambarpur as Bishnupur, the ancient city in Baṅkurā District, Bengāl,² whereas Vīr Singh and Tejā Singh, evidently following the Nānak Prakāś, both name Paṭṇa as the city of Sālas Rāi.³ The compiler of the printed version of the Gyan-ratanāvalī was evidently unaware of either of these possibilities for the sākhīs which concern Sālas Rāi have been inserted at a point which obviously implies a location in western India.⁴ The combination of legendary content, vague geography, and omission from the older collections renders the whole story most improbable. It is remotely possible that some fragment of truth may underlie that tradition, but if so it is unidentifiable.

¹An inscribed ruby which enabled Mardānā to find Sālas Rāi.

²MK, p.140.

³Vīr Singh, Gurū Nānak Chamatakār, vol. i, pp. 185-93. Tejā Singh, Sikhism, p.37. Also Khazān Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol. i, pp. 82-3.

⁴GR, sākhīs 99-107, pp. 247-59. Gurū Nānak is at this stage travelling northwards from Ceylon to Bikaner.

- 40. Rājā Harināth
- 61. Rājā Mitr Sain
- 62. Rājā Jagannāth

These three sākhīs all name rājās with whom, according to Miharbān, Gurū Nānak held discourses in localities well beyond the Pañjāb. There are no details to support the existence of the three monarchs, none of the other janam-sākhīs mention them, and their sole function appears to be to provide suitable partners for three Miharbān discourses.

41. Meeting with Kabīr

Encounters with Kabīr are to be found in the Miharbān Janam-sākhī¹ and the B40 manuscript.² The Bhāī Bālā tradition also introduces Kabīr on a number of occasions, but such sākhīs are evidently of Hindālī origin.³ As they stand these two accounts can certainly be rejected. They are completely different, they are vague as far as location is concerned, they offer no recognisably genuine information concerning Kabīr, and their obvious purpose is to exalt Gurū Nānak by having Kabīr acknowledge

¹Mih JS, pp. 154-6.

²IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folios 136 ff.

³See supra pp. 146-7.

his superiority. This means that there is no authentic tradition concerning a meeting between Gurū Nānak and Kabīr and, as we shall see, there is no adequate evidence that Gurū Nānak knew the works of Kabīr.¹ On the other hand, the possibility of a meeting cannot be ruled out as completely impossible. We may perhaps doubt whether Kabīr really lived to the year 1518, but we cannot reject the possibility of his having done so.² This means that if Gurū Nānak travelled through Banāras he may perhaps have met Kabīr. It is, however, pure hypothesis, chronologically possible but completely devoid of evidence. As such it must be classified as highly improbable.

124. Saidpur: Lālo and Bhāgo

The story of Lālo, the carpenter of Saidpur, is one of the most popular in the entire range of sakhīs concerning Gurū Nānak. The tradition relates that while Gurū Nānak was staying with this person of low caste a certain Malak Bhāgo gave a feast to which the Gurū was invited. The invitation was, however, refused and eventually Malak Bhāgo had to resort to constraint. When the Gurū

¹See Appendix 4, pp. 640-6.

²See supra p. 49.

was brought to him he demanded an explanation for the refusal. Gurū Nanak in reply took in one hand a quantity of Malak Bhāgo's rich food and in the other a piece of Lālo's coarse bread. He then squeezed both. From Lālo's bread trickled milk, but from Malak Bhāgo's food there issued blood. The point of the miracle was obviously to demonstrate that Lālo's food had been earned by honest labour, whereas Bhāgo's was the product of extortion and oppression.

The story itself must be dismissed, in spite of modern efforts to rationalise it,¹ but there remains the question of whether there may in fact have been a carpenter in Saidpur around whom this and other lesser legends have gathered. The answer must be that it is extremely unlikely. In the first place Lālo does not appear in the older janam-sākhīs. Secondly, there is a likely explanation for his entry into the developing stock of traditions concerning Gurū Nanak. In the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs² Lālo is associated with the pad Tilāṅg 5 which begins:

Jaisī mai āvai Khasama kī bāpī taisarā karī gīanu
ve lālo.³

¹E.g. Kartār Singh, Life of Gurū Nanak Dev, pp. 83-4.

²BB JS, sākhī 21, pp. 88-89.

³AG, pp. 722-3.

Every line ends in this same way with the words ve lālo. Tilāṅg 5 is one of the pads which describe the suffering caused by Bābur.¹ The earliest traditions associate all of these Bābar vāṇī pads with his attack on Saidpur and this would mean that the words ve lālo would be taken to refer to an audience addressed by Gurū Nānak in Saidpur. The words in this case would mean "O beloved", a common form of poetic address. The next step must then have been to identify the word lālo as a proper name and so in this manner there evidently developed a tradition concerning Lālo of Saidpur. This hypothesis does not completely destroy the tradition of a Saidpur carpenter called Lālo, but it does render it most improbable.

Possible sākhis

The third category consists of sākhis which cannot be rejected as inherently improbable or definitely impossible, but which must nevertheless be treated with a considerable degree of caution. They are sākhis which offer only limited opportunities for the application of our criteria and which accordingly cannot be either affirmed or denied, even in terms of probability or improbability. Many of them must be rejected in part, but in all there is at least

¹See infra p. 414.

some basic detail which requires us to withhold judgment.

The most we can say in these cases is that they generally tend towards the improbable rather than the probable. Many of them are the kind of story which inevitably gathers around a person of acknowledged spiritual stature and there can be no doubt that several of these sākhīs will have entered the body of tradition in this manner. The difficulty is that when such accretions are both rationally and chronologically possible there is generally no means of separating them from incidents of a similar nature which may have a foundation in fact. We may well assume that a majority of such sākhīs are subsequent additions and that very few would have any factual connection with Gurū Nānak, but we do not possess the means of determining which should belong to the majority group and which to the minority.

Many more of the sākhīs concern Gurū Nānak's travels and here doubts must arise from the fact that most of the places named are the very locations which one would expect the popular imagination to associate with the wanderings of a person such as the Gurū. Places such as Hardwār, Allahābād, Banāras, Jagannāth Purī, Rāmeshwaram, and Ujjain are precisely the kind of pilgrimage centres one might anticipate. We cannot, however, assume that Gurū Nānak did not visit any of these places. On the contrary, it is safe to assume that he would have visited at least some of them and in a

general sense we may accept the tradition, recorded by Bhāī Gurdās and implied by Miḥarbān, that Gurū Nānak's travels included visits to famous tīraths.

What we have is the same problem of separating the likely from the unlikely without the means of identifying either. The fact that the incident or discourse which is set in a certain place is manifestly an invention does not prove that Gurū Nānak did not visit that particular place. We may with good reason decide that most of the incidents which are recorded of his travels beyond his own province are products of the imagination, but we must also conclude that Gurū Nānak obviously did make lengthy journeys outside the Pañjāb and that accordingly he must certainly have visited at least some of these places.

Most of the sākhīs which we shall classify as "possible" fall into one or other of these two sub-divisions. Either they are the kind of story which one inevitably finds associated with the person of a famous saint, or they concern visits to particular places during the Gurū's travels. The first sub-division includes the following:

- 27. Mardānā commanded to throw offerings away
- 33. Sheikh Bajīd
- 49. The brick falls from the temple

- 102. The watchmen receives royal authority
- 106. The inhospitable village unmolested
- 107. The hospitable village dispersed
- 111. The devotees of Kīṛiān Paṭhāṇān
- 112. Discourse with Mīā Miṭhā
- 114. Duni Chānd's flags
- 116. A pious boy
- 118. Anabhī the Jain

Little can be said about any of these. No. 49 tends more towards the improbable than most in that it is confined to the Miharbān Janam-sākhī and set outside the Pañjāb, but it is not thereby disproved. Nos. 106 and 107, which really constitute a single sākhī, relate the kind of story which always finds a ready welcome in hagiography, but again the grounds are insufficient for categorical rejection. In the case of no. 114 a comparison of the account given in the India Office Library manuscript B40¹ with that of the Colebrooke and Hafizābād janam-sākhīs² shows that the incident has been expanded in the latter, but the kernel of the story remains the same in both cases. In both versions the point of the story concerns the needle which Gurū Nānak delivered to the rich man and the expansion of the two Purātan janam-sākhīs

¹IO Library Ms. Panj. B40, folios 189-90.

²Pur JS, sākhī 37, p.71.

chiefly concerns the quantity of wealth which the rich man possessed. In the B40 version there are only four flags flying, signifying four treasure chests, whereas the Purātan account gives seven flags, each representing a lakh of rupees. It is also in this latter account that the name Duni Chand appears.

The second sub-division, that of sākhīs which refer to specific places visited by Gurū Nānak, is a large one. The sākhīs listed here are those which we are obliged to classify without making detailed analyses. In other cases there are factors which make an examination possible and such sākhīs will be considered later.

- 34. Hardwar: the watering of his fields
- 37. Allahābād
- 38. Banāras: discourses with paṇḍits
- 39. Banāras: discourse with Chatur Dās
- 42. Hājipur Paṭṇā
- 48. Jagannāth Purī
- 52. Rameshwaram
- 63. Ujjain
- 64. Vindhya Mountains
- 65. Narabad tīrath
- 66. Bikaner district and city
- 67. The land of Sorathi (Saurashtra)
- 68. Mathurā

69. Kurukshetra: discourse on bathing

71. The Kashmīrī paṇḍit

82. Hīṅglāj

88. The merchant of Dīpālpur

A number of these might well be classified in the first sub-division of "possible" sākhīs. No. 34 is an example and a particularly attractive one. The story of how Gurū Nānak confounded the crowds who were busy throwing Ganges water towards their forbears in the other world is understandably one of the most popular in the whole range of sākhīs.¹ This particular incident is one which may be regarded as entirely possible, but in other cases, such as the discourse with Bharatharī in Ujjain² and the story of the Kashmīrī paṇḍit,³ substantial portions must be rejected. In the case of the Kashmīr sākhī it is obviously impossible to accept the story of how Brahm Dās was sent in search of a gurū, but this certainly does not mean that Gurū Nānak never visited Kashmīr and nor need we conclude that the account of how

¹See supra p.238 . Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol.i, p.35, gives a translation of the sākhī as it is to be found in the modern versions of the Bhāī Bālā tradition. The IO Library Ms Panj. B41 (Bhāī Bālā tradition) and both of the 1871 lithographed editions omit the incident, although the expanded 1871 edition does include a discourse on the banks of the Ganges. (Divān Būṭā Singh 1871 edition, sākhī 250, p.536.)

²Mih JS, gosts 87 and 91-93, pp. 279, 300-309.

³No. 71. See supra p. 222.

Brahm Dās initially became a convert is necessarily untrue.

No. 109 may also be an example of legend superimposed upon an authentic tradition. The Purātan Janam-sākhī presents the story of Jhaṇḍā, the carpenter of Bisīar, as a single sākhī, but it is a sākhī which has two distinct parts. Of these the second, which describes the composition of a work called the Jugāvalī, may be rejected without hesitation. The Colebrooke and Hāfizābād accounts differ, both are very corrupt, the poem is said to have been composed on "an island in the ocean", Gurū Nānak's food at the time is said to have been air, reference is made to an unrecognisable city called Chhuṭhaghātākā or Chhuṭāghātākā,¹ and no work called the Jugāvalī has survived.

The first part cannot, however, be dismissed in this manner, for it contains neither the inconsistencies nor the evident fantasy of the second part. Bisīar may perhaps be a version of Bashahr in the Simlā Hills and it is possible that Gurū Nānak may have once met a person called Jhaṇḍā Bāghī. The fact that the Miharbān Janam-sākhī and the Gyān-ratanāvalī both omit the incident weakens the tradition, but there is at least a possibility that an actual encounter may underlie it. This first portion of the sākhī is very brief in the Purātan account. It merely records that in the in-

¹The first variant is the Colebrooke spelling; the second the Hāfizābād. Pur JS, p.46.

hospitable land of Bisīar only Jhaṇḍā gave shelter to Gurū Nānak and Mardānā, that Jhaṇḍā washed the Gurū's feet, that enlightenment dawned on him while he was drinking the water he had used for the washing, and that the experience led him to abandon worldly concerns in favour of a life of wandering.¹

In most of these travel sākhīs the geographical information given amounts to no more than the name of the city or locality. Occasionally, however, extra details are added and in rare instances they are supplied in abundance. Additional details of this kind do not necessarily indicate a sound tradition, even if they happen to be substantially accurate. One of the rare cases of abundant geographical detail is Miharbān's gost 91 which is set in Ujjain and appears in the chart as a part of No. 63.²

Having conversed with the thags in the south country Gurū Nānak arrived in the city of Ujjain. Many people had gone there on pilgrimage to see the cave of Bharatharī, where Bharatharī was born, which was the cave of Gorakh - yogīs, sannyāsīs, brahmācharīs, bairāgīs, ascetics, house-holders, people following secular callings. They had gathered at Avantakā to bathe during the Vaisākhi festival. And the cave of Gosāin Gorakh Bharatharī is also there. People go there to bathe and to visit

¹The tradition is greatly expanded in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs, See BB JS, sākhi 34, pp. 142-57.

²Mih JS, pp. 300-2.

Avantakā Purī and the cave of Bharatharī. Gurū Bābā Nānak also went there. Bharatharī said, 'This is a great mahā purukh who has arrived. We shall have darsan and we shall also give darsan.' Near the cave there is a mosque. Before its entrance is a four-cornered platform and over it is a tamarind tree. To the right of the tamarind is the entrance to the cave. In front of it is the tamarind tree and in front of the tamarind is the platform of the mosque. There Gurū Bābā Nānak sat down¹

The appearance of Bharatharī is an anachronism,² but at least the primary geographical details are accurate. Avantikā is one of the names used for Ujjain,³ Bharatharī's cave is to be found outside the city on the banks of the Siprā River,⁴ and large melās are held there.⁵ This, however, does nothing to strengthen the tradition for the detail clearly represents the personal knowledge of a later writer, not a report handed down from the Gurū himself.

In this particular case the goṣṭ appears to be, in part at least, a later addition to the janam-sākhī. It purports to describe a discourse held in Ujjain with celibate laṅgoṭībānds. Elsewhere in the Miharbān Janam-sākhī where this particular de-

¹Mih JS, p. 300.

²See supra p. 71, n. 1.

³Central India State Gazetteer: Gwalior, vol.i, p.298.

⁴Mih JS, p. 300 n.3.

⁵Melās are held annually at Sivarātrī (February) and on the full moon days of Vaisākh (May) and Kārtik (November). CIS Gazetteer: Gwalior, vol.i, p.301. Mih JS, p.300 n.2.

signation appears there is a strong suggestion of interpolation and the same would appear to be the case in this gost also. The pad which it incorporates would be much more appropriate to a discussion with yogis than with celibate sādhūs, and part of it is in fact addressed directly to Bharatharī. This latter portion may well represent a part of an original gost which has been incorporated in the revised version. Much of the introduction to the gost is in modern Pañjābī and the incident concludes without the usual conversion of the Gurū's audience. We may safely assume that the gost in its present form was not in the original version of the janam-sākhī and that the geographical details have been reported by a sādhū who once made a pilgrimage to the cave.

36. Nānakmatā

The story of Gurū Nānak's visit to Nānakmatā is also a travel sākhī which concerns a specific place, but it differs from the others of this group in that the location is not a well-known city or centre of pilgrimage. Nānakmatā appears to consist of no more than a temple in the jungle. It is said to be located in Satārgaṅj tahsil of Nainī Tāl District, fifteen miles northwest of Pīlāhīt and ten miles west of Khaṛīmā station on the Rohilkhand-Kumaon railway.¹ According to Kanh Singh the temple

¹ MK, p. 519. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c., vol. i, p. 679.

is administered by Udāsī sādhūs.¹

The mere existence of the place constitutes an argument in favour of the Gurū having visited the locality, but by no means a compelling one. The temple appears in later Sikh history when Gurū Hargobind is said to have gone there in response to a request for help from the mahant, Almast by name.² It is possible that it was during or subsequent to this period that the temple came to be associated with the locality referred to in the Purātan janam-sākhīs. As it stands the Purātan account does not fit a location in Nainī Tāl District for the Nānakmatā sākhī follows the Banāras visit instead of preceding it. The question is a particularly difficult one, and one which appears to require an open verdict.

Two sākhīs which do not fit either of our sub-divisions, but which should be included in the category of "possible" sākhīs are the following:

97. Death of Mardānā

98. Death of Kalū and Tiparā

¹MK, p.519. The later JSSs claim that the locality was originally called Gorakhmatā, but that the name was changed to Nānakmatā in recognition of the Gurū's triumph over the Siddhs. Cf e.g. GR, p.207.

²MK, p.519.

Of these the first may perhaps be accepted as probable for Mardānā and Gurū Nānak would have been of similar age, but the second seems less likely. Gurū Nānak would have been sixty-nine or seventy at the time of his death and if his parents died only shortly before him they must both have attained advanced ages. The sākhīs which refer to their deaths are not to be found in the older janam-sākhīs.¹ The Purātan account does mention a mātā in the sākhī which describes the death of Gurū Nānak himself,² but this is obviously a reference to his wife who in subsequent Sikh tradition is characteristically referred to in this way. According to the Gyān-ratanāvalī she died fifteen days after the Gurū, but again this is a point which is not to be found in the older sources.³

Eighty-seven sākhīs out of the total of one hundred and twenty-four listed in the chart have now been summarily classified as either possible, improbable, or impossible. The balance of thirty-seven sākhīs consists partly of incidents which can in like manner be assigned to the probable category, and partly of sākhīs which can be discussed at some length before being classified.

¹The BB JS does, however, refer in passing to their deaths at an unspecified but obviously much earlier time. (BB JS, p.288.)

²Pur JS, sākhī 57, p.111. There is also a reference to mātā in sākhī 53, p.107.

³GR, sākhī 219, p.587.

For convenience we may group them as follows:

Dates

1. The birth of Gurū Nānak
100. The death of Gurū Nānak

Family relationships

1. The birth of Gurū Nānak
9. The marriage of Jai Rām and Nānakī
10. Betrothal and marriage
14. Birth of Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand

Daulat Khān Lodī and Sultānpur

20. To Sultānpur
21. Work in Daulat Khān's commissariat
22. Immersion in the river: his call
24. The mullāh seeks to exorcise his evil spirit
25. Discourse with the qāzī
26. Departure from Sultānpur

Visit to Assam

46. The country ruled by women

Visit to Dacca

47. Dacca

Rājā Śivanābh and Ceylon

- 18. Bhāgīrath and Mansukh
- 19. Mansukh and Rājā Śivanābh
- 54. Rājā Śivanābh and the Prāṇ Saṅgalī

A thag converted and the first dharmśālā built

- 60. Sajjan the thag

Discourse with the Siddhs on Mount Sumeru

- 72. Mount Sumeru

Mecca and Medina

- 75. The mullāh's village
- 76. Rahīm and Karīm
- 79. Mecca: the moving mosque
- 80. Medina

Visit to Baghdad

- 81. Baghdad

The Emperor Bābur and the sack of Saidpur

- 83. The sack of Saidpur
- 84. Discourse with Bābur
- 85. Bābur attacks Tillā

The conclusion of the udāsīs

- 86. Return to Talvaṇḍī and reunion with parents

Visit to Pāk Paṭṭan

87. Pāk Paṭṭan: discourse with Sheikh Ibrāhīm

The founding of Kartārpur

89. The wealthy man humbled: the founding of Kartārpur

Discourses with Siddhs

73. Gorakh-haṭṭarī
90. Achal Baṭālā

Visits to Multān

74. Multān
91. Multān: the jasmin petal

Gurū Aṅgad

92. First meeting with Lahīṇā
93. Lahīṇā's clothes ruined
95. Lahīṇā becomes Aṅgad
99. The installation of Gurū Aṅgad

Gurū Nānak's Date of Birth

The janam-sākhīs do not disagree with regard to the year of Gurū Nānak's birth, but there is a difference concerning the actual month and it is one which has resulted in a protracted controversy. The Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs and the Gyān-ratanāvalī all state that Gurū Nānak was born during the light half

of Vaisākh, S.1526.¹ The Khālsā College's second Miharbān manuscript and the India Office Library manuscript B40 both add that the actual date was the third day of the light half of Vaisākh,² a date which is the equivalent of April 15th, 1469 A.D.³ The Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs, on the other hand, give the date as Kattak Pūranmāsī, S. 1526, the full moon day of the month of Kārtik, more than seven months later.⁴

The controversy concerns which of these two days should be accepted as the birthday of the Gurū. A third is given in

¹ 'Tab Gurū Bābā Nānaku Sammat 1526 Vaisākh māsī thiti tritiā chānāṇī kau paharu rāti pichhali rahatī kau ambrit velā janamu laiā.' - Mih JS, p.9.
 'Sammat 1526 Bābā Nānaku janamiā Vaisākh māhi tritiā chānāṇī rāti amrat velā pahar rāt rahandī ku janamiā.' - Pur JS, p.1.
 'Sammat 1526 Vaisākh mās sukal pakh tritiā thit savā pahir rāt rahindī avitar dhāriā.' - GR, p.41.

² 'Vaisākho din tijai.' - Khālsā College second Ms, Mih JS, p.9 n.5.
 'Samat 1526. Bābā Nānaku janamiā. Vaisākho din tijai chānāṇī rāti amrit velai paharu rāti rahadī janamiā.' - IO Library Ms. Panj. B40, f.1.

³ Karam Singh, Gurapurb Nirāṇay, pp. 43-5, 57.

⁴ BB JS, p.7.

the Mahimā Prakāś Kavita:

Samata bikrama nirapa ko pandraha sahasa pachīsa,¹
Vaisākha sudī thita tīja ko parau santa bapa īsa.

This gives the third day of the light half of Vaisākh, S.1525, exactly one year earlier than the date given in the older janam-sākhīs. The difference may be, as Karam Singh suggests, a result of the writer having used expired instead of current dating, but it is much more likely that it is simply a mistake. Another manuscript which Karam Singh quotes² and which, he says, follows the Mahimā Prakāś, gives S.1526. It is also evident that the author of the Mahimā Prakāś Vāratak must have accepted S.1526.³

Neither Vaisākh sudī 3 nor Kattak Pūranmāsī can be accepted as established beyond all doubt, but it is clear that of the two the former is much the more likely. The latter is confined to the Bhāī Bālā tradition and to subsequent works based upon it. It should be added, however, that the case against Kattak Pūranmāsī is, for all its strength, not quite as overwhelming as Macauliffe

¹Quoted by Karam Singh, Kattak ki Visākh, p.223.

²An undated Ms found in Vairovāl, Amritsar District. Karam Singh, op.cit., pp. 223-4.

³See infra p.325, n. 1. For the Mahimā Prakāś Kavita and Mahimā Prakāś Vāratak see supra pp. 172-4.

evidently believed. Macauliffe draws attention to what appears to be an interesting error in Santokh Singh's Nānak Prakāś. Santokh Singh follows the Bhāī Bālā tradition as usual and gives Kattak Pūranmāsī as the date of Gurū Nānak's birth,¹ but he also records that the Gurū lived seventy years, five months and seven days. Counted back from the date which he gives for the Gurū's death² this gives a date very close to Vaisākh sudī 3.³

The printed edition of Nānak Prakāś does indeed record that Gurū Nānak lived for seventy years, five months and seven days,⁴ but it is doubtful whether Santokh Singh actually wrote this. Vīr Singh adds in a footnote that some manuscript copies of the Nānak Prakāś omit this reference.⁵ The inconsistency is patently obvious as it stands and it seems unlikely that Santokh Singh could have failed to perceive it. The formula of seventy years, five months and seven days is given in Mahimā Prakāś

¹Nānak Prakāś, canto 3 (70). Vol. ii, p. 150 in Vīr Singh's edition.

²The tenth day of the dark half of Asū, S.1596.

³Macauliffe, i.lxxxiv.

⁴Nānak Prakāś, canto 57 (90). Vol. iv, p. 1255 in Vīr Singh's edition.

⁵Ibid., p. 1255 n.*

Vāratak¹ and the likelihood appears to be that it has been subsequently interpolated into the Nānak Prakāś.

Macauliffe describes the manner in which Kattak Pūranmāsī came to be generally adopted by the Sikh community;² but says nothing about how it ever came to be included in the Bhāi Bālā tradition in the first place. This is not surprising as anything we may say in this respect must be pure conjecture. Karam Singh's theory was that the Hindālīs inserted it as a part of their effort to denigrate Gurū Nānak at the expense of Bābā Hindāl.

It has also been pointed out how the Nirāñ-janīs have made malicious alterations concerning the Gurū. Their giving of Kattak Pūranmāsī as his date of birth instead of Vaisākh sudī 3 is another example of an attempt to mislead. It would appear that at the time of making this attempt they must have had in mind that well-known Pañjāb superstition which is as follows. If a woman gives birth to a child in Bhādr̥on or Kattak that child is put out of the house. Many people, putting it out of the house, make an offering to a brāhmaṇ and then having paid the price take the child from him, believing that in so doing they cleanse its impurity.

¹Nānak Prakāś, canto 57 (90). Vol. iv, p. 1255 in Vīr Singh's edition, n. *. The formula is the exact difference between Vaisākh sudī 3, S.1526, and Asū sudī 10, S.1596 (Karam Singh, Gurapurb Niranay, p.51). Accordingly, these must have been the dates accepted by the author of the Mahimā Prakāś Vāratak for Gurū Nānak's birth and death respectively.

²Macauliffe, i.lxxxiv-vi. He does not, however, give any adequate authority for his account of how Bhāi Sant Singh decided to declare Kattak Pūranmāsī the authentic date in order to draw Sikhs away from a Hindu mela which was held at Rām Tīrath on that date. He merely records that he owed his information to Bhāi Gurmukh Singh.

As this janam-sākhī came to be used, so this month came to be accepted and when gurgurabs started to be celebrated Kattak Pūranmāsī became the currently accepted date for the first Satgurū's birthday.²

This may be correct, but it is no more than a guess and there is no evidence to support it.

It is accordingly impossible to give any satisfactory explanation for the introduction of Kattak Pūranmāsī. There can, however, be no doubt whatsoever that its claims to authenticity are vastly inferior to those of Vaisākh sudī 3, or at least some date within the light half of Vaisākh. This latter dating has the support of all the better sources, whereas Kattak Pūranmāsī can be traced to nothing more reliable than the Bhaī Bālā tradition. Most Sikh scholars now accept the Vaisākh date.³ The only exceptions of any importance are Gyan Singh⁴ and Khazān Singh,⁵ writers who belong to generations now long past but whose works still exercise some influence. In Gyan Singh's case the adherence

¹Anniversaries of the Gurūs' birthdays.

²Karam Singh, Kattak ki Visākh, pp. 224-5.

³MK, p.519; Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, p. 2; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.29; Gopāl Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, vol. i, p. xxxv; Kartār Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, pp. 303-5; Sāhib Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darapan, vol. x, p.756. Karam Singh's Kattak ki Visākh is devoted exclusively to repudiating the Kattak date.

⁴Gyan Singh, Panth Prakāś, (6th edition) p.28; Tavārīkh Gurū Khālsā, (3rd edition) vol. i, part i, p.81. These works have been very influential.

⁵Khazān Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol.i, pp.30-35. Other writers who have accepted Kattak Pūranmāsī are Lajwanti Rama Krishna, Les Sikhs, p.24, and Sewaram Singh, The Divine Master, pp. 18-19.

to Kattak Puranmāsi is understandable as he produced his significant work before 1885, the year in which both the Colebrooke and Hāfizābād manuscripts were published. Khazān Singh, whose History and Philosophy of Sikhism was published in 1914, uses Karam Singh's method in reverse. Just as Karam Singh sought in his Kattak ki Visākh to establish the Vaisākh date by attacking the whole of the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhī tradition as totally unreliable in all respects, so Khazān Singh denied it by affirming the reliability of the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs.¹ and repudiating those of the Purātan tradition.²

The weight of evidence and of scholarly opinion is thus strongly on the side of the light half of Vaisākh, but it appears that the controversy is still alive. Dr. Trilochan Singh of Brindāban has recently produced two articles which support the Kattak date.³ Like Khazān Singh he is compelled to base his case upon the impossible claim that the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs represent a trustworthy and generally accurate source of information. The only new argument he introduces is an appeal to Bhāi Gurdās.⁴

¹See supra p. 131.

²"The whole work seems to be an incoherent collection of traditions mostly wrong, and the date of birth recorded is apparently based on hearsay." Loc. cit., p.33. Khazān Singh is a singularly unreliable writer, but his work has been widely used.

³The Sikh Review, vol. xi, no. 11, November 1963, pp. 23-39; and vol. xii, no. 2, February 1964, pp. 22-37.

⁴It is generally agreed that Bhāi Gurdās is silent on the question of Gurū Nanak's date of birth, although it has been claimed that the
(cont.)

Although Bhai Gurdas has not given any dates of the historical events of the lives of the Gurus, he has incidentally written a complete poem glorifying Guru Nanak's birth on Kartik Purnamashi.¹

He then quotes Bhāi Gurdās's Kabitt Savayya 345, the first couplet of which is:

Kārtika māsi ruta sarada pūranamāsi,
Aṭha jāma sāṭha gharī āja terī bārī hai.²

This he translates, with considerable freedom, as follows:

It is the Kārtik month,
And the full moon night,
The season is soothing cool:
On this auspicious day,
It was Thy turn to come,
In this time-encircled world,
Of eight pehars and sixty gharīs.³

(cont.)

following line from Vār 1, paurī 27, constitutes evidence indicating the first day of Vaisakh as the correct date:

Ghari ghari andari dharamasāla hovai
kīratanu sadā visōā.

For this argument (which concerns the interpretation of the word visōā) see Tejā Singh Overseer, Khālsā Rahit Prakāś, pp. 73-5. There can be no doubt that this is incorrect. The translation should be:

In every house a dharmasāla was established and kīrtan was sung (as if it were) an unending Baisākhi festival.

¹The Sikh Review, February 1964, p.34.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

It is true that this savayyā may be interpreted as a reference to a particular person's birth, but it is also true that it may be interpreted as a conventional reference to the month of Kārtik in the style of the Bārah Māhā, the "Twelve Month" or calendar poem. The balance of probability must be held to favour the latter. In the first place there is no reference to Gurū Nānak. Secondly, the key verb in Dr. Trilochan Singh's translation, the very "to come", is not in the actual poem. Thirdly, the form is a common one in Pañjābī literature and it would have been an entirely natural one for Bhāī Gurdās to have used. And fourthly, as we have already observed, the janam-sākhīs which belong to the Bhāī Gurdās' period or soon after all specify Vaisākh. In the light of this fourth point the savayyā could be admissible as contrary evidence only if it were free of such a likely alternative interpretation. The fact that the poem stands in isolation and is not set in the context of a complete Bārah Māhā does not affect this conclusion. Farīd's Āsā 2, which also makes a conventional reference to Kārtik, is not a part of a Bārah Māhā.¹

As there is no dispute concerning the year of Gurū Nānak's birth this controversy would be of relatively slight importance were it not for the fact that a definite date must be acknowledged

¹AG, p.488.

by the Sikh community in order that the anniversary may be celebrated. Kattak Pūranmāsī has been firmly entrenched for almost a century and there is little likelihood that the custom of holding the annual celebrations in November will be abandoned in favour of April.

Place of birth

If the testimony of the janam-sakhīs is to be accepted Gurū Nānak's birth-place was his father's village, Rāi Bhoi kī Talvāṇḍī. The name 'Nānak', however, raises doubts as it implies that the birth must have been in the home of the maternal grandparents.¹ Khushwant Singh accepts the implication as established fact:

The janamsakhis and the Mahimā Prakāś state the place of birth to be "in the house of Mehta Kalu Bedi of Talwandi Rai Bhoi." This statement need not be taken literally. The custom of returning to the maternal home for confinement was well-established in Hindu families. The choice of the name confirms the fact of the birth taking place in the mother's parental home, which was in the village of Kahna Katcha. Cunningham supports this view and bases it on an old manuscript, but without giving its reference. Mehervan's janam-sakhi mentions Chahleval near Lahore as Nanak's place of birth.²

¹The word nānā means 'maternal grandfather' and nānak may be used as a common noun to mean 'a mother's family or lineage'.

²A History of the Sikhs, vol. i; p.30 n.11.

It is true that the name 'Nānak' strongly implies that the birth took place at the home of the Gurū's maternal grandparents, but it is perhaps going too far to affirm this as proven. As Khushwant Singh indicates, all the janam-sākhīs except that of Miharbān specify Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī as the place of birth. Miharbān's record is not clear at this point. The Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript does indeed name the village of Chāhalāvāle¹ in the gost which describes the Gurū's birth,² but elsewhere it states with equal clarity that Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī was the place where he was born.³ Moreover, the second manuscript in the possession of Khālsā College omits the name Chāhalāvāle⁴ and is evidently consistent in specifying Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī. It is impossible to say whether Chāhalāvāle is an interpolation in the Sābo kī Talvaṇḍī manuscript or whether the subsequent references are the interpolations. It may even be that both names were in the original and that what we have here is simply a case of confusion.

¹The village of Chāhal, the traditional birth-place of Gurū Nānak's mother, is near Barakī in the district and tahsīl of Lahore. MK, p.345.

²Mih JS, gost.4, p.9.

³Ibid., pp. 52 and 470.

⁴Ibid., p. 9 n. 4.

We must, however, acknowledge that at some stage there was a tradition abroad that the birth-place was Chāhal and that this tradition may possibly have found expression in the original version of the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. This tradition, together with the implication borne by the Gurū's name, points to his mother's village as a strong possibility, but in view of the contrary testimony of the other janam-sākhīs we cannot affirm it as definitely established. The village indicated in this manner would be Chāhal, not Kahnā Katchā as given by Khushwant Singh and also by Cunningham.¹ Khushwant Singh does not state whether he is here following Cunningham and the latter's unidentified manuscript, or whether he bases his statement on some other source.

Gurū Nānak's Date of Death

Just as there is disagreement between the janam-sākhīs concerning the date of Gurū Nānak's birth, so too there is disagreement regarding the date of his death. The divergence is more serious in this latter case for it involves not simply a difference

¹J. D. Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs (1st edition, 1849), p.40 n. *. W. L. M'Gregor's The History of the Sikhs, which was published in 1846, gives "the village of Maree, which is near Kot Kutchwa" as the place where the Gurū was born (loc.cit., vol.i, p.32).

in the precise date given, but a disagreement concerning the actual year. Three dates are given. The Purātan janam-sākhīs give Asū sudī 10, S.1595, the tenth day of the light half of the month of Asū, S.1595, which would have fallen during September, AD 1538.¹ The Gyān-ratanāvalī also gives Asū sudī 10 as the day of the month, but records that the year was S.1596 (AD 1539).² The third date is that given in the Bhaī Bālā janam-sākhīs. This tradition agrees with the Gyān-ratanāvalī as far as the year is concerned, but gives the actual date as Asū vadi 10, the tenth day of the dark half of Asū.³

¹Pur JS, p.115. Ms number 2310A of the Sikh History Research Department, Khālsā College, Amritsar, is a Purātan Ms which gives S.1596 as the year of Gurū Nanak's death. (Kirpāl Singh, A Catalogue of Punjabi and Urdu Manuscripts in the Sikh History Research Department upto March 31, 1963, p.12.) This manuscript was, however, written in S.1829 (AD 1772) by which time the 1596 dating was well established in Sikh tradition. The Colebrooke and Hafizabad MSS obviously represent the authentic Purātan tradition at this point and they are supported by the IO Library Ms Panj. B40 (folio 230). Moreover, the Khālsā College Ms is evidently prone to error as far as dates are concerned for it gives Gurū Nanak's date of birth as S.1536 (AD 1479), instead of S.1526. This is presumably the third Ms which Vir Singh used in compiling the Pur JS. (See supra p. 81 .)

²GR, p.587. The JS adds that the Gurū's wife died fifteen days later. Karam Singh, Gurapurb Nirāṇay, pp. 47-9 and 57, gives September 22nd, 1539, as the exact equivalent of Asū sudī 10, S. 1596.

³School of Oriental and African Studies, Ms number 104975, folio 303. BB JS, p.402. The expanded 1871 edition (Dīvān Būṭā Singh, Lahore), p.587, gives the year as 1546, which may be either a simple error or an unsuccessful attempt made by the printer to convert the date given in the MSS to Christian reckoning.

These are the three dates and it is difficult to decide between them, or at least between the first two. Opinion is divided, some accepting the Purātan dating,¹ some that of the Gyan-ratanāvalī,² and a few that of the Bhāi Bālā tradition.³ The Miharbān Janam-sākhī unfortunately offers no help at this point as only the first three of its six pothīs have been found.⁴ The last of the six presumably gave a date for the Gurū's death.

The third date cannot be definitely rejected, but it appears to be the least likely of the three. The Bhāi Bālā is generally unreliable and in any disagreement it is safer to accept the version given by the other janam-sākhīs. It is true that numerous manuscript copies of the Ādi Granth which include lists giving the dates on which each of the ten Gurūs died are strongly on the side of the Asū vadi 10 dating,⁵ but these copies were all written either during the period of the

¹Macauliffe, i.191; Volker Moeller, Art. Die Lebensdaten des Glaubensstifters Nanak in the Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. vii, 1964, no. 4, p.295; Mohan Singh, A History of Panjabi Literature, p.23; Kirpal Singh, Miharbān Janam-sākhī, p.114 n.2

²MK, p.519; Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.17; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.37; Karam Singh, Gurapurb Nirāṇay, p.57; Sahib Singh, Srī Guru Granth Sāhib Darapan, vol. x, p.759.

³Khazān Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol. i, p.106; Kartār Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, p.263.

⁴See supra pp. 107-8.

⁵All of the Ms copies in London which include such a list give Asū

emergence of the Bhāi Bālā tradition or subsequent to it.

Of the remaining two, the Purātan dating may be regarded as the more likely by reason of the greater age of the source, but the standards of accuracy which the Purātan janam-sākhīs maintain are certainly not such that we can accept its information without question, particularly when there is no other source to support it. Karam Singh has argued that the Purātan tradition must be using expired dating and that its S.1595 may accordingly be accepted as S.1596 in current reckoning.¹ This argument would, however, require S.1525 as the date given by the Purātan janam-sākhīs as Gurū Nānak's date of birth. Karam Singh states that the Purātan tradition does in fact give S. 1525,² but he is wrong. The Colebrooke, Hāfizābād, and B40 manuscripts all have S. 1526. The Mahimā Prakāś Kavita, as we have already seen, does give S. 1525,³ but not the Purātan janam-sākhīs.

(cont.) vadī 10, S. 1596 as the date of Gurū Nānak's death. There is one such copy in the BM (Or. 2159) and five in the IO Library (MSS Panj. C3, C5, D2, D3, and F1). If such a list is included it always follows immediately after the tatkarā (table of contents).

¹Karam Singh, Gurapurb Nirāṇay, pp. 53-4.

²Ibid., p.54.

³See supra p. 323.

Karam Singh also draws attention to the life span of seventy years, five months and seven days recorded in the Mahimā Prakāś Vāratak and perhaps by Santokh Singh in the Nānak Prakāś.¹ This he shows to be the exact difference between Vaisakh sudī 3, S. 1526, and Asū vadī 10, S. 1596, and accordingly claims it as support for the Gyān-ratanāvalī dating. It proves nothing, however, except that the two dates must have commanded an appreciable measure of acceptance during the eighteenth century. It does not carry us back to any source as old as the Purātan tradition.

Our conclusion must in this case be the highly unsatisfactory one that we do not know the year in which Gurū Nānak died. We can accept Asū as the month, but we are unable to decide whether the year was AD 1538 or 1539. All accounts agree that the Gurū died in Kartārpur and this may accordingly be accepted. Needless to say, the miraculous disappearance of his body must be dismissed as legend.² A similar story is recorded in the case of Kabīr.³

¹Op. cit., p. 51. See supra p.325,n.1.

²See supra p.227.

³Ahmad Shah, The Bijak, p.28. Briggs records similar stories in connection with Daryā Shāh of Uderolā, the founder of the Dayānāth Panth of Gorakhnāthis, and of Ratannāth of Peshāwar, a disciple of Bhartṛhari. (G. W. Briggs, Gorakhnāth and the Kānpahā Yogīs, pp. 65, 66.)

Family relationships

The janam-sākhīs all give the names of at least a few of Gurū Nānak's relatives. As one might expect the briefest list is that which may be compiled from the Purātan janam-sākhīs and, as one would certainly expect, the longest is that of the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs . The relatives mentioned in the various janam-sākhīs are as follows:

1. Purātan janam-sākhīs

Father:	Kālū, a Bedī khatrī of Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī ¹
Mother:	Referred to but not named ²
Sister:	Referred to but not named ³
Sister's husband:	Jai Rām ⁴
Wife:	Referred to but not named ⁵
Wife's father:	Mūlā, a Choṇā khatrī ⁶
Sons:	Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand ⁷

¹Pur JS, p.1.

²Ibid., p.8.

³Ibid., p.13.

⁴Ibid., p.12.

⁵Ibid., p.8.

⁶Ibid., p.6.

⁷Ibid., p.7.

2. Miharbān Janam-sākhi

Father:	Kālū, a Bedī khatri of Rāi Bhoē kī Talvaṇḍī ¹
Mother:	Tiparā ¹
Sister:	Not mentioned, but plainly indicated in a reference to Jai Rām as Gurū Nānak's <u>bahanoī</u> ²
Sister's husband:	Jai Rām, an Uppal khatri employed as steward by Daulat Khān Lodī of Sultānpur ²
Wife:	Ghumī ³
Wife's father:	Mūlā, a Choṇā khatri of Baṭālā ⁴ and formerly of the village Pokho dī Randhāvī ⁵
Sons:	Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand ⁶

3. Gyān-ratanāvalī

Father:	Kālū, a Bedī khatri of Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī ⁷
Mother:	Tripatā ⁷
Sister:	Nānakī ⁸

¹Mih JS, p.9.

²Sister's husband. Ibid., p.72.

³Ibid., p.67.

⁴Ibid., p.29.

⁵Ibid., p.516.

⁶Ibid., p.73.

⁷GR, p.45.

⁸Ibid., p.112.

Sister's
husband: Jai Rām¹

Wife: Referred to but not named¹

Wife's
father: Mūlā, a Choṇā khatri of Baṭālā¹

Sons: Sirī Chand and Lakhmī Dās²

4. Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhī

Father: Kālū³, or Mahitā Kālū,⁴ a Bedī khatri
and paṭvārī⁵ of Rāi Bhoi dī Talvaṇḍī

Mother: Tripatā⁶

Maternal
grandfather: Rām, a Jhaṅgar⁷

Maternal
grandmother: Bhirāī⁷

Father's
brother: Lālū⁸

Father's
brother's son: Nand Lāl⁹

¹GR, p.112.

²Ibid., p.113.

³BB JS, p.7.

⁴Ibid., p.8.

⁵The village land accountant. Ibid., p.14.

⁶Expanded 1871 edition (Divān Būṭa Singh, Lahore), p.5. The BB JS and the IO Library Ms Panj. B41 refer to her simply as Bībī Kālū dī isatri (BB JS, p.9) or as Amā Bībī, "the Lady Mother" or "the revered Mother" (Ibid., p.30).

⁷BB JS, p.36.

⁸Ibid., p.4.

Mother's brother:	Kriṣṇa ¹
Sister:	Nānakī ²
Sister's husband:	Jai Rām, a Paltā khatri ²
Sister's husband's father:	Paramānand ³
Wife:	Sulakhani ⁴
Wife's father:	Mūlā, a Chonā khatri and <u>patvari</u> of Pokho di Randhavi. ³
Wife's mother:	Chando Rāni ⁵
Sons:	Siri Chand and Lakhmi Dās ⁶

Family memories are long in the Pañjāb and it is accordingly safe to assume that at least the two older janam-sākhīs are reliable in the information they give concerning the family of Gurū Nānak. All of the janam-sākhīs agree that his father was Kālū, a

(cont.)

⁹IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 30a.

¹BB JS, p.36.

²Ibid., p.22.

³Ibid., p.30.

⁴The name is used only once in the Ms B41 and in the BB JS (BB JS, p.48). Elsewhere in these two early Bhai Bala versions she is referred to as Māta Choni, her family name.

⁵BB JS, p.48.

⁶Ibid., p.52.

khatri of the Bedi sub-caste who lived in the village of Rai Bhoi ki Talvaṇḍi. This may be accepted without reservation and we may also accept as at least probable the Bhai Balā information that he was a patvāri. The statement is confined to the Bhai Balā janam-sākhī, but it does receive some support from the Miharbān Janam-sākhī which records that Kālū was employed in chākari¹ and which implies that the employment was one which commanded at least a moderate measure of respect.²

In the same manner we may also accept Tiparā as the name of his mother. The two later janam-sākhīs both give her name as Tripatā which is obviously a variant of the Miharbān version, and it is by this name that she is universally known in all modern Sikh literature. This is understandable as the Tiparā or Tiparo form is confined to the Miharbān Janam-sākhī, which has only recently been published, and to a few old, unpublished manuscripts which have received little attention.³

¹Employment in civil administration.

²Mih JS, p.70.

³Kirpāl Singh, Mih JS, p. 67 n. 5, quotes a couplet from a Ms in the Pañjab State Archives, Pañjālā:

Bedi kula Kālū pitā, mātā Tipuro tāsū,
Guru Nānaka Ghumī pate, Sri Chanda Lakhmī Dāsa.

Kālū of the Bedi family was his father, and
Tipuro his mother;
Guru Nānak was the husband of Ghumī, and Sri
Chand and Lakhmī Dās (were his sons).

His sister's name, which in the Gyān-ratanāvalī and the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs is given as Nānakī, is a little more doubtful. It is obvious that Gurū Nānak had a sister, but neither of the older janam-sākhīs name her, and in the Gyān-ratanāvalī the name appears in the context of a brief incident which is plainly legend and which may well be one of the later additions to the janam-sākhī.¹ On the other hand, no source offers an alternative name and it seems reasonable to accept the name Nānakī as probable.

All of the janam-sākhīs agree that the sister's husband was called Jai Rām and that he was employed as a modī, or steward, by Daulat Khān Lodī of Sultānpur. There is, however, disagreement concerning his sub-caste. Miharbān refers to him as an Uppal khatri and the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs as a Paltā khatri. Of these the former appears to be the more likely. Miharbān is almost always more reliable than the Bhāī Bālā record and in this particular instance it is probable that as a descendant of the third and fourth Gurūs he would have access to trustworthy information.

¹GR, sākhī 50, p.113. It is recorded that Gurū Nānak caused Nānakī to conceive a son and a daughter by giving her a clove and a cardamom. He then caused his own wife to conceive two sons by giving her two cloves. The same sākhī also states that Gurū Nānak's marriage was arranged by Nānakī and Jai Rām.

The most interesting difference of all in the names provided by the four janam-sākhīs concerns the name of the Gurū's wife. The Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs give her name as Sulakhaṇī and, as in the case of his mother, it is by the Bhāī Bālā name that she is known and revered in all modern Sikh literature and tradition. Miharbān states, however, that her name was Ghumī and again he is supported by other old manuscripts.¹ We must accordingly accept Ghumī as more likely than the traditional Sulakhaṇī.

There is also disagreement among the janam-sākhīs concerning the time of the Gurū's marriage. The Bhāī Bālā tradition sets it in Sultānpur after he had gone there and secured employment under Daulat Khān,² whereas the other three all record it prior to his departure from Talvaṇḍī. The Purātan janam-sākhīs give his age as nine at the time of his marriage (AD 1478-9)³ and the Gyan-ratanāvalī as fourteen (AD 1483-4).⁴ Miharbān gives it as "fifteen or sixteen" and states that the betrothal ceremony commenced on Vaisākh vadi 1, S. 1542.⁵ The wedding evidently followed soon

¹Kirpāl Singh, Mih JS, p. 67 n. 5 (See supra p.34ln. 3)

²BB JS, sākhī 12, pp. 43-46.

³Pur JS, p.6.

⁴GR, p.112.

⁵Mih JS, p.29.

after, which would mean that both betrothal and marriage took place, according to this account, in AD 1485. The Miharbān Janam-sākhī and the Gyān-ratanāvalī both give Baṭālā as the place where the wedding was held.

The unanimous testimony of the Miharbān, Purātan, and Manī Singh Janam-sākhīs is certainly to be preferred to that of the Bhāī Bālā tradition and we may accordingly conclude that the marriage probably took place before Gurū Nānak moved from Talvaṇḍī to Sultānpur. We may also accept Baṭālā as the place where it was held. The actual date must, however, be regarded with more caution. The period indicated by Miharbān and the Gyān-ratanāvalī (AD 1483-5) would be entirely possible, but both accounts show evidence of the writers' imaginations and it may be that these were the sources of the dates they give. Moreover, in their accounts of Gurū Nānak's early life both tend to attach consecutive ages to each successive sākhī and there can be no doubt that most, if not all, of these must be rejected.

All four versions are consistent in their descriptions of Gurū Nānak's father-in-law and we may accordingly accept that he was Mūlā, a khatrī of the Choṇā sub-caste, originally from the village of Pokho dī Randhāvī¹ but resident in Baṭālā at the time

¹On the right bank of the Rāvi, opposite the town of Dehrā Bābā Nānak. See supra p. 263, n.1.

of the marriage. The Bhāi Bālā account adds that he was a patvārī which may be correct, but is more likely to be a transference from the tradition concerning Kālū.

The janam-sākhīs are also unanimous in naming two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand, as the Gurū's only children and there can be no doubt that this is also correct. The chief difference in the four accounts is that the two older versions imply that Lakhmī Dās was the elder,¹ whereas the two later versions explicitly state that Sirī Chand was born first.

This is as far as the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs and the Gyān-ratanāvalī take us. The Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs add the names of several other relatives, but in the absence of support from any of the other accounts these can be regarded as at most only possible. It is difficult to accept that Miharbān would have omitted all reference to Lālū, the brother of Kālū, had he in fact existed and impossible to accept all of the many names which the Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhīs supply for various people who appear in their account of the life of Gurū Nānak. They even give the name of Jai Rām's cook.² Many are plainly inventions and it is quite possible that this also applies to at least some of the

¹They refer to both births in a single sentence, naming Lakhmī Dās first and Sirī Chand second.

²Nidhā, a Brāhmaṇ. BB JS, p.22.

names which they give for relatives of Gurū Nānak.¹

Two other names which appear in modern tradition are those of Śiv Rām (or Śiv Narāyan) and Banārasī, the father and mother of Kālū. These are given by Santokh Singh in the Nānak Prakāś and are accordingly open to even greater doubt than the names recorded in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs.²

Finally, there is the name of one person who was not actually a relation of Gurū Nānak, but who was, according to most of the janam-sākhīs, very closely associated with him during his childhood and early manhood. This was Rāi Bulār, traditionally regarded as a son of the Rāi Bhoi whose name generally appears in references to Gurū Nānak's village.³ Most of the janam-sākhīs record that Rāi Bulār was the village landlord during Gurū Nānak's early years and that he perceived in the young man signs of spiritual greatness which had evidently escaped Kālū.

¹It probably applies to almost all the names which are given for the members of the marriage party which went from Talvaṇḍī for Gurū Nānak's wedding: 'Kālū, Lālū, Paramāramū, Lālū dā put Nand Lāl. Indrasain, Phirandā, Jagatarāi, Lālachand. Jugū, Sital, Jaṭamal, jitane Vedī ahe sabhe tayār hoi raho.' IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 30a. The commas (but not the full stops) have been added by the writer. The lists given in the BB JS (p.44) and later versions differ in varying ways from this list.

²Nānak Prakāś, canto 3:48, 50. Vol. ii, p.148 in Vīr Singh's edition.

³Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī. MK, p.768.

The record of the janam-sākhīs concerning Rāi Bulār has been universally accepted, but there are reasons why it should be regarded with some doubt. In the first place, Miharbān states that the landlord during Gurū Nānak's early life was Rāi Bhoā, not Rāi Bulār.¹ Secondly, the Purātan references to Rāi Bulār are to be found in Sākhīs which are manifestly unhistorical.² Thirdly, Bhāī Gurdās makes no mention of him in his list of Gurū Nānak's more important followers.³

These reasons do not mean that Rāi Bulār never existed and nor do they necessarily mean that the role assigned to him in most of the janam-sākhīs must be rejected. What they do indicate is that we can no longer accept the janam-sākhī descriptions of him as beyond doubt. They may be basically correct, but there also exists the definite possibility that they are false.

¹Mih JS, p.25.

²The restored field (Pur JS, sākhī 4, pp. 6-7); the tree's stationary shadow (sākhī 5, p.7). He appears much more frequently in the Bhāi Bala JSs.

³Var 11, paurīs 13-14. See supra pp. 190-1.

Daulat Khān Lodī and Sultānpur

The janam-sākhīs all record that while still a relatively young man Gurū Nānak spent a period in the town of Sultānpur,¹ working there for Daulat Khān Lodī.² The account is basically the same in all four janam-sākhī traditions. All relate that Gurū Nānak moved to Sultānpur at the invitation of his brother-in-law, Jai Rām, who was employed as a steward by Daulat Khān. Jai Rām commended Nānak to his employer and secured for him a position in Daulat Khān's commissariat. Some time later, while bathing in a nearby river,³ he was carried away to God's presence and there charged with the task of preaching the Nām.⁴ Emerging from the river three days later he uttered the words, "There is neither Hindu nor Muslim". The local qāzī regarded this as an insult to the faith of Islām and Nānak was brought to account before Daulat Khān. After successfully defending himself he left Sultānpur with Mardānā and began his travels.

¹The town is situated in Jullundur District, 16 miles south of Kapurthala. Its situation on the imperial high road between Delhi and Lahore made it a town of considerable importance during Mughal times. It was sacked by Nādir Shāh in AD 1739 and never recovered its former prosperity. Punjab State Gazetteers (Kapurthala State), vol. xivA, p.45.

²The Purātan janam-sākhīs do not append Lodī, referring to him simply as Nawāb Daulat Khān. There can, however, be no doubt that their reference is to Daulat Khān Lodī.

³The janam-sākhīs do not name the river, but it would obviously be the Vein River which flows past Sultānpur.

⁴For Nām see infra pp. 498-502.

All of the accounts include miraculous material which must be discarded, but with the exception of the immersion in the river such material concerns only the details of the story and its rejection leaves the basis unaltered. The interview with God during a period of three days spent submerged in the river must also be rejected as it stands, but the incident is one which permits a rational interpretation. It would be entirely reasonable to regard the janam-sākhī accounts as efforts to describe an ecstatic experience, a climactic culmination of years of searching issuing in illumination and in the conviction that he had been called to proclaim divine truth to the world. With this modification the story becomes wholly credible and we must now decide whether or not it can be accepted.

The evidence in this case leads us to regard the Sultānpur interlude as highly probable. In the first place it concerns events which took place in the Pañjāb. As we have already observed, traditions which relate to incidents or episodes within the province are generally more reliable than those which concern areas beyond its borders, for in such cases the corporate memory of the community can play a significant part. Although legend accumulates quickly it may be doubted whether such an important episode would be completely without foundation.

Secondly, the janam-sākhīs are unanimous as far as the basic

details are concerned. Bhāi Gurdās does not refer directly to this period, but he does mention Daulat Khān as one of Gurū Nānak's followers.¹

Thirdly, there is the testimony of the Dabistān to strengthen that of the janam-sākhis:

Before the victory of the late Emperor (Babar), he (Nanak) was a Modi to Daulat Khan Lodhi, who was one of the high officials of Ibrahim Khan Emperor of Delhi. And, Modi is an official in charge of the granary.²

Fourthly there is nothing in what we know of Daulat Khān Lodī which conflicts with the tradition. He occupied a position of considerable importance during the later years of Sultan Sikandar Lodī (AD 1489-1517) and during the reign of Sikandar's successor Ibrāhīm Lodī (AD 1517-26), but nothing explicit appears to have been recorded of his early life up to his appointment as governor of Lahore at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. Bābur describes him in a brief, misleading paragraph.

This Tātār Khān, the father of Daulat Khān, was one of six or seven sardārs who, sallying out and becoming dominant in Hindūstān, made Buhlūl Padshāh. He held the country north of the Satluj (sic)

¹Var 11, paurī 13. See supra p. 191.

²Gandā Singh, Nānak Panthīs, p.4. The corresponding reference for Shea and Troyers' translation of The Dabistān is vol. ii, p.247.

and Sarhind, the revenues of which exceeded 3 krurs. On Tātār Khān's death, Sl. Sikandar (Lūdī), as overlord, took those countries from Tātār Khān's sons and gave Lāhur only to Daulat Khān. That happened a year or two before I came into the country of Kābul (910 AH.).¹

This is incorrect in that it allows no gap between Tātār Khān and Daulat Khān in the government of Lahore, other than the indefinite reference to "Tātār Khān's sons". The Tārīkh-i-Salāṭīn-i Afghānā and the Tārīkh-i-Dāūdī record that shortly before Bahlūl Lodī's death in 1489 Tātār Khān, who had risen in rebellion, was defeated and killed by Nizām Khān, the future Sultan Sikandar.² The omission of this incident from other histories, notably from the Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī, raises an element of doubt concerning its authenticity, but it seems clear that there was a break between the termination of Tātār Khān's governorship and the beginning of Daulat Khān's period, for Daulat Khān's appointment must have been made after the incumbent governor, Sa'īd Khān Sarwānī, was exiled in 1500 for his part in the conspiracy against Sultan Sikandar.³ In other words, there must have been at least one other governor between Tātār Khān and Daulat Khān.

¹BN(B), i.383.

²TSA, extract translated in N. Roy's Niamatullah's History of the Afghans, Part I, pp. 107-9. TD, E & D iv, pp. 440-44. See *supra* p. 28-9.

³TA, B. De Translation, p.369. TKJ, E & D v, p.96. See *supra* p. 29.

Bābur does, however, confirm that Daulat Khān was the son of Tātār Khān, and this would mean a connection with Pañjāb administration prior to 1500. Apart from the janam-sākhīs, however, there appears to be no hint of what this connection meant in terms of actual responsibility or achievement. Mrs. Beveridge twice states that he was the founder of Sultānpur,¹ but she does not name her source and neither the Persian histories nor the Bābur-nāma appear to offer this information. According to the Punjab State Gazetteers the town was founded in the eleventh century by Sultān Khān Lodī, a general of Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazni.² It goes on to add that this information is "according to tradition", but of these two possible origins it appears to be the more likely. The difficulty is that Mrs. Beveridge had access to the Gazetteers and she was certainly not inclined to make categorical statements without first ascertaining their basis. In one other case, however, she does err in her identification of a Pañjāb town³ and it seems likely that her statements concerning the origin of Sultānpur represent another such error. It is possible that the janam-sākhīs

¹BN(B), i.442 and ii.461 n.3.

²Punjab State Gazetteers (Kapurthala State), Vol. xivA, p.45. Muhammad Nāzim makes no reference to a general called Sultān Khān Lodī in his The Life and Times of Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazna.

³See infra p. 410, n. 1.

are the ultimate source of her statements, although none of them records that Daulat Khān founded the town.

The most we can accept concerning Daulat Khān's life prior to his lengthy term as governor of Lahore is that his relationship to Tātār Khān must have meant a position of some standing in the Pañjāb, and that his appointment to Lahore would have been made within the first four years of the sixteenth century. The earliest possible date would be 1500, the year in which Sa'id Khān Sarwānī was expelled. Bābur's reference to "a year or two before I came into the country of Kābul" implies 1502 or 1503, as his arrival in Kābul in 910 AH corresponds to 1504. There is, however, an element of vagueness in his expression. An appointment soon after Sa'id Khān Sarwānī's expulsion seems more likely.

These two conclusions certainly do not establish a connection between Daulat Khān Lodī and Sultānpur prior to 1500, and if considered apart from the janam-sākhī tradition they do not even imply one. They do, however, render it at least possible. An appointment to Lahore in 1500 or shortly after would fit the chronology of Gurū Nānak's early life in the sense that the association, if it actually took place, must have been prior to this date.

The evidence available seems to indicate a two-fold conclusion. In the first place, we may accept as established the tradition that Gurū Nānak, as a young man, spent a period in Sultānpur, working in

the employment of the nawāb of that town. The location of the incident within the Pañjāb and the basic unanimity of the janam-sākhīs appear to justify this conclusion. Secondly, we may accept as probable the claim that this nawāb was Daulat Khān Lodī. In this respect an element of doubt must remain, for it is possible that the connection may have arisen through Daulat Khān's undoubted association with Sultānpur in 1524, or through the common tendency to introduce associations with persons of acknowledged stature. The reference in Bhāī Gurdās and the Dabistān indicate, however, an unusually strong tradition and the external evidence raises no objections to its acceptance.

The Visit to Assam

With the significant exception of Miharbān, all the janam-sākhīs include a sākhī which describes a visit to a country ruled by female magicians. The accounts vary in several respects, but the basis of the story is the same in all of them. All relate that Mardānā, who went ahead of the Gurū to beg for food, was put under a spell by one of these exchantresses and turned into a sheep. When the Gurū went in search of him efforts were made to work magic on him also, but to no effect. The women eventually acknowledged his superior power and made their submission to him.¹

¹For the Purātan version see supra pp.204-5. See also supra pp. 163-5.

The substance of the sākhī must be rejected as a wonder story, but in this particular case we should examine the location ascribed to the incident in order to determine whether or not there may be an element of fact behind the legend. An examination is necessary in this case as such an element has in fact been almost universally assumed. It is this sākhī, or more accurately two of the several versions of this sākhī, which provide the basis for the common statement that Gurū Nānak's travels extended as far as Assam, a statement which is to be found in practically every modern account of Gurū Nānak.¹

The two versions which have given rise to this tradition are those of the Purātan and Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs, particularly the former. In the Purātan janam-sākhīs the story is set in a land which is called either Kaurū or Kāvarū,² both of which are evidently variants of Kāmrūp. This, at least, is the assumption which has been made by all who accept a visit to Assam and it is a reasonable one. The nature of the sākhī appears to confirm this. Assam is famed as a home of the Tantras, and the magic described in the sākhī has been taken as an expression of tantric practices. All printed editions of the Bhāī Bālā version give the name as Kārū, but in the India

¹Cf MK, p.69 (art. Assam); Macauliffe, i.73; Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.8; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.33.

²Pur JS, pp. 33-4.

Office Library manuscript B41 it appears, as in the Purātan janam-sākhī, as Kaurū.¹ This manuscript version records a sākhī which differs radically from that of the Purātan janam-sākhī, but it does concern women magicians who turn Mardānā into a sheep and make unsuccessful efforts to overcome the Gurū.² These references to Kaurū have been accepted as satisfactory evidence of a visit to Assam and the point has not been challenged.

It must, however, be both challenged and rejected. In the first place, it is clear that Kāmṛup was not ruled by women during the period of Gurū Nānak's lifetime. The kings of western Kāmṛup³ during the latter decades of the fifteenth century were Chakradhvaj (c. 1460-80) and his son Nilambar (c. 1480-98), and in eastern Kāmṛup authority was divided between a number of petty chieftains. In 1498 Nilambar was overthrown by Alāuddīn Husain, Sultān of Gaur, and a Muslim garrison was installed in the capital Kāmatapur under a general called Dāniyal. This garrison did not hold the city for long. Some time before 1505 it was attacked by a confederacy of Bhuyan chiefs and completely destroyed. The subsequent period is not entirely clear, but it seems that another king gained the throne,

¹IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 70b.

²See supra pp. 135, 163-4.

³It is usually referred to as Kāmata during this period.

probably Nāgākṣa whom the Kāmṛupar Buranji refers to as king in connection with the building of the Bilvesvar temple in 1521. Nāgākṣa was evidently succeeded by his son Durlabhendra who was killed in 1540. There is certainly obscurity at this point, but there can be no doubt that the rulers of eastern Kāmṛup were men, not women.

The same applies also to western Kāmṛup where during the period following Nilambar's fall the various chieftains were brought under the authority of the Koche chieftain Hājo. This authority subsequently passed to Hājo's grandson Bisu (1515-40)¹ who greatly extended it and who in 1527 assumed the regnal name of Bisva Siṅgha.²

It is accordingly clear that no kingdom within Kāmṛup could have been ruled by women during the time of Gurū Nānak. Nor could it have been the Āhōm kingdom for it was ruled during this period by King Suhungmung (1497-1539).³ Indeed there is no likelihood whatsoever that such a kingdom would have been found amongst Kāmṛup's Assamese neighbours. Matrilineal descent was certainly a

¹Hājo had two daughters, Hīra and Jīra, both of whom were married to a certain Haria Mandal. Bisu was the son of Hīra.

²E. A. Gait, A History of Assam (2nd edition), pp. 42-9; Rai K. L. Barua Bahadur, Early History of Kamrūpa, pp. 283-4. See also N. N. Acharyya, The History of Mediaeval Assam (A.D. 1228 to 1603), a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London, 1957; and Francis Buchanan, "General View of the History of Kamarupa" (Appendix C of S. K. Bhuyan's edition of the Kamrupar Buranji, pp. 139-143).

³E. A. Gait, op.cit., p.86.

feature of Khāsi and Gāro society,¹ but it was not one which produced queens or chieftainesses. The result of this custom was not that women inherited power or property, but that such inheritances descended through them to their sons.²

The second reason for rejecting the sākhi as evidence of a visit to Assam is the fact that the names which may be taken to mean Kāmṛūp are confined to the Purātan and Bhāi Bālā janam-sākhis. Miharbān omits the incident altogether, the Gyan-ratanāvalī places it in the south country immediately before the crossing to Ceylon,³ and the India Office Library manuscript B40 gives it an unspecified location "beside the ocean".⁴

The contrast between this latter version and that of the Purātan janam-sākhis is particularly significant for no sākhi brings out more plainly the fact that we have in the B40 manuscript a more primitive collection than in the Purātan janam-sākhis to which it is related. In the B40 manuscript no definite location is named, there is no queen, no pot is made to adhere to the en-

¹Jayantīā Buranjī, pp. x-xi.

²"The chief of a Khāsi state is succeeded not by his own, but by his sister's son." E. A. Gait, op.cit., p.260.

³GR, pp. 227-30. This location may perhaps indicate a knowledge of Malabar matrilineal customs. Cf also Appendix 3, p.631.

⁴IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folio 83.

chantress's head, and no pad is uttered by Gurū Nānak. It is altogether a much simpler version and the extra details which are to be found in the Purātan sākhi are obviously the kind of exaggerations which a story gathers as it is transmitted orally. What we have in the B40 manuscript is a simple miracle story, whereas the Purātan janam-sākhis give us a more developed version of the same story.

There can be no doubt that the name Kaurū or Kāvarū must be included among the accretions which the story has gathered and it is not difficult to perceive how it entered the tradition. The ancient Kāmarūpa, as distinct from the medieval kingdom or the modern district, would have been as well known in the Pañjāb as in other parts of India, for it figured prominently in both the Purāṇas and the Tantras.¹ Assam in general and Kāmarūpa in particular were closely connected in the popular understanding with erotic practices and tantric magic, and it is scarcely surprising that a sākhi which evoked such impressions should come to be associated with the place which, above all others, symbolised these impressions.

This would have been one factor and a second may possibly have been the "female kingdom" against which Arjuna is supposed

¹Gait gives an account of the origin of the name Kāmarūpa according to mythology. Op.cit., pp. 11-12.

to have fought in the Mahābhārata. This "female kingdom" was generally supposed to have been Jayantīā,¹ but it was at least in Assam and of the two areas Kāmarūpa would certainly have been the better known.

The process would then have been as follows. A simple miracle story concerning an encounter with female magicians must have evolved and circulated orally. In this form we have it recorded in the B40 manuscript. The oral versions would, however, have continued to circulate and inevitably they would have been expanded in the process. The references to women and to magic would plainly suggest Assam. Of all places in Purāṇic and Tantric mythology none would be more closely associated in the popular imagination with women and magic than Kāmarūpa and so the name found its way into the sākhī. Some time later one of these expanded versions of the sākhī was recorded in the janam-sākhī from which both the Colebrooke and Hāfizābād janam-sākhīs are descended. The name did not, however, find universal acceptance in the oral tradition. Later still the compiler of the first half of the Gyān-ratanāvalī recorded another version of the same sākhī and it was one which did not contain the name Kāmarūpa or a derivative from it.

¹Jayantīā Buranjī, p.ix.

The Kaurū and Kāvarū which we find in the Purātan and Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs must accordingly be regarded as the Kāmarūpa of mythology, not the contemporary kingdom of Kāmata. The basic wonder story can be rejected on rational grounds and the possibility that we have in the Purātan and Bhāī Bālā locations a substratum of truth must also be rejected. It is not possible to state categorically that Gurū Nānak never visited Assam, but we can affirm that there is no evidence to support such a visit.

The Visit to Dacca

The tradition concerning a visit to Dacca is weak in the janam-sākhīs, but it is one which nevertheless requires an examination as its authenticity has been defended on the basis of external evidence. In the janam-sākhīs such a visit is recorded only in the Bhāī Bālā tradition and within this tradition there are two conflicting versions of the circumstances. The older of the two sets the story of Mardānā and the forbidden fruit (no. 28) in dharatī Dhake Baṅgale dī, "the region of Dacca, Bengal".¹ There can be no doubt that this is a later addition to the sākhī.²

¹IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 70a. BB JS, sākhī 24, p.101.

²Perhaps as a result of confusing the dhak, or Butea Frondosa, with the poisonous swallow-wort called the ak which appears several times in the JSs. (See supra p.176.). It would be natural to assume that the "poisonous fruit" which was given to Mardānā was from the ak and the expanded 1871 edition makes the identification explicit. (Divān Būṭā Singh edition, p.403.)

for no such location is found in the versions given by the earlier janam-sākhīs.

The second appearance of the name is an even more obvious case of interpolation, in this case a recent one made by a printer. The modern versions which are available today set the story of Bhūmīā the Landlord in Dacca.¹ This same story is to be found in the expanded 1871 edition, but without a location.² The words "in Dacca" are clearly a recent addition. The reason for the addition was probably the conviction, based upon the external evidence to be mentioned shortly, that Gurū Nānak must have visited the area. The Bhūmīā sākhī follows the "Country ruled by Women" sākhī in the expanded 1871 edition; the latter is believed to have taken place in Kāmṛup; subsequent sākhīs indicate that Gurū Nānak moved south after visiting Kāmṛup; and therefore Bhūmīā must have lived in Dacca. This appears to have been the line of reasoning which led to the insertion of Dacca in the most modern versions of the Bhāī Bālā tradition.

The janam-sākhī references to such a visit can accordingly be rejected, but there remains the evidence which was put forward almost fifty years ago by Sardār G. B. Singh. In 1915 and 1916 a series of articles on "Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal" were published

¹ Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī, Munshī Gulāb Singh and Sons, 1942 edition, sākhī 89, p.311.

² Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī, expanded 1871 edition (Dīvān Būṭā Singh, Lahore), sākhī 171, p.358.

in the Dacca Review.¹ The greater part of these articles relates to the period following the travels of the ninth Gurū, Tegh Bahādur (1621-75), but in the first of them G. B. Singh claimed to have discovered conclusive evidence of a visit to Dacca by Gurū Nānak. The relevant portion of this first article is as follows:²

The contact of Eastern Bengal with Sikhism begins very early indeed in the pre-Moghal days. The sixteenth century was yet in its infancy, when Guru Nanak the founder of the faith visited Dacca in the time of Hussein Shah the Good, for it was only a short time after his return from this trip to the Eastern parts that he was taken prisoner by Babar's men at the sack of Saidpur in 1524 A.D. Dacca, of course, did not exist then as such. Sonargaon was the capital of the Province; and what is called Dacca now, was only the seat of a thanadar. The site of Dacca and its suburbs was covered over by large number of insignificant villages whose names mostly survive in those of the quarters of the town up till now It was a trading centre of some importance, which attracted the trading classes from far and wide long before it became the capital under Islam Khan. But it was a fame of a different kind which attracted Guru Nanak. He had left his home and travelled on foot with a single companion through Hindustan and Bihar to Kamrup, visiting all the sacred places, Hindu and Mohammadan, en route.

¹Dacca Review, vol. v, nos. 7 and 8, October and November 1915, pp. 224-32; vol. v, no. 10, January 1916, pp. 316-22; vol. v, nos. 11 and 12, February and March, 1916, pp. 375-8. An article by the same author also appeared in the now defunct Sikh Review, July 1915.

²It is possible that this copy contains a number of small transcription errors. Neither the Dacca Review nor the old Sikh Review are available in the United Kingdom and efforts to obtain copies from India and Pakistan were unsuccessful. The text which has been used is a typescript copy of the articles which was loaned to the writer by Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh of Patiala.

From Kamrup he turned his steps south and was on his way to the temples of Kali and Jagannath Puri. The temple of Dhakeshwari, one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in olden times, lay on the way and was not simply to be passed by. Guru Nanak therefore broke his journey here and landed at the northernmost ghat at Rayer Bazar. The place was probably inhabited by poor people of the potter class as at present; for it is among these people that the tradition of the Great Teacher's visit survives and a sort of devotion still lingers, though the memories have long since grown vague and dim. A well commemorates this visit to the present day. Out in the waste near Jafarabad, half hidden in bramble growth, a well and a heap or two of debris are the only visible signs of the Sikh monastery that once flourished there. To judge from the signs the temple originally consisted of a well and a small building with arched doorway and a vaulted roof, to which were added later a tank and a baradari on the edge of this tank. The well is known as Guru Nanak's well and there is a local tradition that Guru Nanak drank from the well. The Sikh story, a little rationalised, is that he dug a hole for drinking water with his pointed stick. However that may be, the place became sacred in the eyes of the Sikhs and Sikh ascetics soon followed to establish a monastery there. So that after the two mosques (that of Binat Bibi and another) built about 1458 A.D. in the days when Nasiruddin Mohammad Shah was king of Bengal, this well would appear to be the most ancient relic near Dacca. Miraculous properties have been attributed to the water of the well ever since the visit of the Guru and people from the villages in the neighbourhood gather together here once a year in the month of Chaitra for a picnic now, but perhaps continuing in howsoever changed a form, an annual fair and yagya held in connection with the Sangat. All fish and meat is avoided on the occasion, I hear. But the reverence for the Guru or the belief in the curative powers of the water in the well had not been sufficient for the proper care of the well, which, till recently was in a very dilapidated condition and would soon have closed up. Fortunately a few companies of the 22nd Sikhs were stationed here for a short time; the district authorities were approached and the well repaired by the District Board partly helped by public subscription.

This is G. B. Singh's case and in it he makes two points. First, there is the claim that memories of the visit still survive amongst the poor people of the potter class. These memories he acknowledges to be "vague and dim" and he tells us nothing of their content. Secondly, there is the well "out in the waste near Jafarabad"¹ and again the only evidence appears to be local tradition. Had there been any other evidence suggesting a link with Gurū Nānak we may assume that he would certainly have mentioned it.² There can be no doubt that there must have been an old well of some description as there would otherwise have been nothing for the 22nd Sikhs to have repaired, but it appears that they must have owed their interest in it to a tradition which was current amongst the Sikhs of the surviving saṅgat.

Neither of these points can be accepted as sufficient evidence to establish a visit to Dacca by Gurū Nānak. Sikh beginnings in Bengal may well precede the visit of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, but if so they are much more likely to have resulted from immigration to the area by Pañjābi traders during the seventeenth century. G. B. Singh himself draws attention to the movement of the khatri traders in his third

¹Jafarābād or Zafarābād was the area now occupied by the Dhanmandī Residential Area.

²Khushwant Singh unaccountably refers to Chittagong, as well as to Dacca, and claims that tablets discovered there mention the stay of the first and ninth Gurūs. (A History of the Sikhs, vol.i, p.302.) The authority he gives is the series of three articles by G. B. Singh from the Dacca Review. The second and third articles do refer to Chittagong, but there is no reference to either Gurū Nānak or to any tablets mentioning him.

article.¹ It is significant that Dr. A. H. Dani's book Dacca omits all reference to the well, the feature which is of key importance as far as G. B. Singh's case is concerned. It is clear that Dr. Dani had read the article which states the case, as he quotes from it in connection with the Sikh gurdwārā at Shuja'tpur.² The fact that he makes no mention of the well in a book which specifically concerns the ancient monuments of Dacca can only mean that he did not accept G. B. Singh's account of its origin.³

The janam-sākhi references to a Dacca visit must be rejected and the evidence offered by G. B. Singh is exceedingly slender. We cannot completely rule out the possibility of such a visit, but we are bound to regard it with marked scepticism when its sole basis is an uncorroborated oral tradition of the kind which inevitably gathers around a famous religious figure.

¹"While the Aroras as a rule went north to Kabul, Kandahar, Balakh, Bukhara and Russia, the Khattris monopolised the markets of India to the East and the South I have stated above how large colonies of Khatri traders had established themselves at Agra, Prayag, Benares, and Patna, and later on right away as far as Dacca, Chittagong, and Sondip." Typescript copy of the third of G. B. Singh articles, Dacca Review, February and March, 1916. See also A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c., vol. i, p.687.

²A. H. Dani, Dacca, (second edition) p. 178.

³Dr. Dani has confirmed this in a letter to the writer (3.1.65). He also writes that he made enquiries in Rayer Bazar in 1951, but discovered that the tradition had faded away as most of the Hindus had left. The well was in existence in 1951, but cannot now be traced. The only factor which, he considers, could possibly point to a visit to Dacca is the belief that Gurū Nanak visited Kāmṛp. This belief we have already rejected.

Rājā Śivanābh and Ceylon

The tradition that Gurū Nānak visited Ceylon is to be found in the Purātan and Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs and in the Gyān-ratanāvalī.¹ In all versions except that of the earlier Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs it has two parts, the first being the story of how a Sikh trader, whom the Gyān-ratanāvalī and later Bhāī Bālā accounts call Mansukh, sailed to the land of Rājā Śivanābh and there converted him to the religion of Gurū Nānak.² The second part describes how the Gurū himself subsequently journeyed there in order to meet his royal disciple and while there composed the Prāṇ Saṅgalī.³ In the Purātan version the land is not named in the first part, but in the account of Gurū Nānak's own visit it is identified as Siṅghalādīp (Ceylon).

This tradition is one of the few which can be tested by reference to external evidence for it specifies not just Ceylon, but also the rājā whom, it claims, Gurū Nānak met there. The name Śivanābh indicates that the rājā, if he in fact existed, must have been a Śaivite and this must point to the kingdom of Jaffnā. Else-

¹Pur JS, sākhī 47, pp. 86-90. GR, sākhīs 87-94, pp. 232-43. BB JS, sākhī 29, pp. 120-23.

²Pur JS, sākhī 41, pp. 76-8 (Hāfizābad Ms only). GR, sākhī 82, pp. 224-5. The IO Library Ms B41 and the BB JS do not contain this sākhī. In the expanded 1871 edition it is sākhī 27, p.100. For the Purātan version see supra pp. 216-18.

³See infra p. 447, n.1.

where in Ceylon the contemporary dynasties were Buddhist, but in Jaffnā the rulers of this period were Śaivites. None of them, however, was named Śivanābh. The two kings who occupied the throne of Jaffnā during the time of Gurū Nānak's travels were Parājasēkharan VI and Segarājasēkharan VII.¹

Jaffnā must accordingly be eliminated, but before concluding that Rājā Śivanābh did not live in Ceylon consideration should be given to the testimony of the Hakikat Rāh Mukām Rāje Śivanābh kī, a brief work attached to many old manuscript copies of the Ādi Granth

¹The University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, vol. i, p. 701. Segarājasēkharan VII assassinated and succeeded his father in 1519. Mundaliyar C. Rajanayagam, Ancient Jaffna, pp. 373-4, gives the following list of Jaffnā kings from S. Gnanaprakasara's Kings of Jaffna in the Portuguese Period:

1.	Kanagasuriya	Segarajasekaran	1467 AD
2.		Pararajasekaran	1478 "
3.	Sankili	Segararjasekaran	1519 "
4.	Puvi Raja Pandaram	Pararajasekaran	1561 "
5.	Kachi Nayinar (usurper)	Pararajasekaran	c1565 "
6.	Periya Pulle	Segarajasekaran	c1570 "
7.	Puviraja Pandaram	Pararajasekaran	c1582 "
8.	Hendarmana Cinga (Edirmanna Singha)	Pararajasekaran	1591 "
9.	A minor son under the regency of		
	1. Arasakesari		1615 "
	2. Sankili Kumara		1617 "
10.	Philip de Oliveira, Portuguese Governor		1620 "

See also V. Vriddhagirisan, The Nayaks of Tanjore, p.78, and C. S. Navaratnam, Tamils and Ceylon, p.179. The minor son of number 9 was the Roman Catholic convert, Prince Don Constantine.

which purports to be a description of how to get to Rājā Śivanābh's kingdom.¹ The Hakikat Rāh claims that Rājā Śivanābh was the grandfather of Māyādunne. It errs in locating Māyādunne in Jaffna, but he is at least an historical figure and his period is such that his grandfather could conceivably have been alive during the time of Gurū Nānak's travels. Māyādunne's grandfather, however, was not called Śivanābh. He was Parākramabāhu VIII who reigned in Kōṭṭē from 1484 until 1508. Accordingly the Hakikat Rāh must be rejected as evidence of a visit to Ceylon by Gurū Nānak.²

What then are we to conclude concerning Rājā Śivanābh? G. B. Singh suggested that he may have been a khatrī landlord who had emigrated to Ceylon from the Pañjāb.³ There is, however, no evidence whatsoever to support this theory. G. B. Singh makes his suggestion in the context of a reference to the Hakikat Rāh⁴ which, as we have just noted, furnishes no confirmation of the tradition.

Our conclusion must be that if Rājā Śivanābh did exist he had no connection with Ceylon and that accordingly the tradition

¹For a description and examination of this work see Appendix 3, pp. 629-39. It is hereafter referred to as simply the Hakikat Rāh.

²This question is examined in detail in Appendix 3.

³Dacca Review, February and March, 1916.

⁴Or perhaps a slightly different work based on the Hakikat Rāh. See Appendix 3, pp. 637-8.

concerning Gurū Nānak's visit to the island must be dismissed. In the first place there is the evident fact that no such person corresponds to any contemporary ruler in Ceylon. Secondly, there is the significant omission of any Ceylon visit by the Miharbān Janam-sākhī. Thirdly, there is the absence of any reference to Śivanābh or Ceylon by Bhāī Gurdās. Fourthly, there is the fact that the India Office Library manuscript B40 records both the story of the Sikh trader and the subsequent meeting between Gurū Nānak and Rājā Śivanābh without any mention of Siṅghalādīp.¹

This last point is a most significant one. As in the case of the Triā rāj dī sākhī² its significance lies in the contrast between the B40 and Purātan accounts and in the fact that it is only the later of the two versions which gives the specific geographical location. The B40 account of the Sikh trader's conversion and journey to Śivanābh's kingdom corresponds almost exactly to that of the Purātan's sākhī 41,³ and although its treatment of Gurū Nānak's meeting with Śivanābh lacks the same measure of verbal identity and expands the portion which describes the efforts of the mohinīs to tempt the Gurū, the basic details it gives are almost all the same as those of

¹IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folios 138 ff.

²See supra pp. 358-9.

³Pur JS, pp. 74-8 (Hāfizābād Ms only).

the Purātan account. The only exception is the omission of any reference to Siṅghalādīp in the B40 version.

As in the Hafizabād manuscript, the B40 account records that following his conversion the merchant took ship and sailed "to where Rājā Sivanābh lived".¹ This nautical reference may be held to indicate Siṅghalādīp, but it is by no means a necessary assumption. On the contrary, it is a common feature of all the janam-sākhīs, except that of Miharbān, that Gurū Nānak is said to have crossed the sea to unspecified islands or lands. Such references are particularly frequent in the Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhīs, but they are also to be found in the Purātan account.² Geographical inexactitude is generally associated with the historically dubious and this appears to be invariably the case when the inexactitude concerns a location somewhere over the sea. Indeed, references to the samundar (ocean) are almost always associated with incidents containing generous measures of the fantastic. The significance of these references is not that they must all point to Ceylon, but rather that their remote settings should prompt an even greater degree of caution.

¹Ms B40, folio 140b.

²Pur JS, sākhī 29, p.46; sākhī 45, p.82; sākhī 46, p.84.

The probability appears to be that the incident concerning Śivanābh had an early origin, but that it had no specific location in the early traditions, oral or written. This would mean that the whole of the B40 account and the first part of the Purātan version (sākhī 41) represent an earlier stage in the evolution of the story than the second part of the Purātan version (sākhī 47) or the later janam-sākhī accounts of the complete episode. It is impossible to identify with complete certainty the manner in which the name of Siṅghalādīp came to be attached to the tradition. It may have been the result of visits to the south by Sikh traders, for it is conceivable that the reference to the converted shopkeeper sailing "to where Rājā Śivanābh lived" may have come to be associated with these later trade contacts. This is one possible explanation and others could be the prominence of Siṅghalādīp in Pañjāb folklore,¹ or the simple fact that if an unspecified maritime location were to be given a name Siṅghalādīp would have been the obvious choice.

The first two references to Siṅghalādīp in the Purātan version occur at the very beginning of sākhī 47.

Siṅghalādīp was then remembered. They went and stood in the fathomless sea. Then Bābā said, 'How is this fathomless ocean to be crossed?' The disciples

¹ Cf Mohan Singh, An Introduction to Panjabi Literature, p.186.

Saido and Siho said, 'Master, at your command a mountain crosses.' The Gurū then spoke saying, 'Proceed reciting this ślok :¹
 'Then Bābā spoke saying, 'The disciple who will have this ślok in his mouth and who will go on reciting it, and as many as follow him and hear it - all will cross the Ocean of Fear.' The disciples fell at his feet saying, 'Master, you carry across whomsoever you please.' Then they crossed over into Śivanābh's Singhalādīp and stopped in Śivanābh's garden. When they crossed the sea Rājā Śivanābh's expensive² garden, which had been dry, became green. Flowers bloomed, leaves unfolded, trees bore fruit.....³

In the B40 manuscript there is no break between the story of the converted shopkeeper (Purātan Janam-sākhī, sākhī 41) and Gurū Nānak's arrival in Śivanābh's domain (Purātan Janam-sākhī sākhī 47). The shopkeeper concludes his instruction to the rājā and departs, and Gurū Nānak arrives immediately after.

Bābā Nānak knows the inner thoughts of men. He is a perfected person. Because of the rājā's adoration he went there. There was a garden⁴ which had been dry for many years

The account then proceeds to describe the miraculous blooming of the garden.

¹Here follows the Mūl Mantar. See infra p. 449.

²Literally: nine lākhs.

³Pur JS, p.86.

⁴'Bābā Nānaku antari jāmi hai. Pūra purakh hai. Rāje ke arādhe te uha jāi nikaliā. Ik ju bāgu thā kai barasā kā sukā thā.....'
 IO Library Ms Panj. B40, folio 145a.

The third Purātan mention of Singhalādīp occurs at the conclusion of the section which describes how Śivanābh, at the Gurū's command, cut his son's throat, stewed his flesh, and began to eat it.¹ This incident is not included in the B40 account. The two remaining references are in a brief sākhī which both Purātan manuscripts attach to the story of Śivanābh. This sākhī describes the daily routine in a certain dharmasālā and the writing of a work entitled the Prān Saṅgalī. The text is corrupt and difficult to translate, but the meaning appears to be as follows:

The Evening Service of the Singhalādīp saṅgat:
When night falls all gather in the dharmasālā and sit down. Then one Sikh is appointed to prepare the food at night which they eat together next day. The Sikh whose food is used receives into his kitchen twenty-one mounds of salt. There secret teachings are revealed. By the grace of the Satgurū. The Prān Saṅgalī was written, an account of the Palace of the Void, meditation on the Formless One, the secret sayings of the Gurū, the nature of the breath and the body. The Gurū's food was air. This happened over the sea. It happened in Singhalādīp, the territory of Śivanābh. With him at that time were Saido and Sihon and the Prān Saṅgalī was composed. Part 1, Rāgu Āsā, Mahālā 1:

There the Prān Saṅgalī was composed. He expounded wisdom concerning the body³ but no one was permitted

¹Pur JS, p.88.

²Here follows the text of the Prān Saṅgalī. See Appendix 3, pp.631-2.

³Vīr Singh argues that the text at this point should be not dehī kī chīn mathī, but rather tade hī kīchīo ne pothī, in which case the meaning would be: 'At that time a volume was prepared....'
Pur JS, p.89 n 6

to take it. Saido the Gheī wrote it in verse and left it near Gorakh-haṭarī.¹ There is an open place near Gorakh-haṭarī, two kos across and four kos from that maṛī.² There he remained detached. The mysterious saying was not made manifest, but in the midst it will not be obtained.³ Rājā Śivanābh received it and it was announced: 'A man will come from Jambūdīp. Give him the document.' Ślok 15. Saido completed the second udāsī. Bābā kept him with him. Rājā Śivanābh received a mañjī.⁴ The Guru was very pleased with Rājā Śivanābh. He left there. Bolo Vahiguru.⁵

The B40 version is much more coherent. It records that Rājā Śivanābh built a dharmsālā at Gurū Nānak's command, and it also agrees both that the routine described was that of Śivanābh's dharmsālā and that the Prāṇ Saṅgalī was composed in his territories. There is, however, no mention of Siṅhalādīp.

Bābā jī remained there for many days. He composed many works and composed the Prāṇ Saṅgalī there. He made many Sikhs. There is as much land over the ocean as there is on this side of the ocean. The rājā of that town was Śivanābh. The whole of the country applauded: 'Praise be to Bābā Nānak! Praise be to him who imparted greatness to the rājā of that land!' The rājā has built a dharmsālā. He has established belief in the Śabad. One hundred

¹For Gorakh-haṭarī see infra p. 425 n.1.

²A place where ashes are buried after cremation, or perhaps a monastery or temple. MK, p.717.

³This is a particularly obscure sentence.

⁴For mañjī see supra p. 208, n. 1.

⁵Pur JS, pp. 89-90.

maunds of salt are used in the rājā's kitchen.
 Having effected that country's salvation and
 having spread much religious teaching Bābā
Nānak came away. The sākhī is finished.¹

There was no contemporary ruler in Ceylon called Śivanābh
 and all the evidence points to a later introduction of the name
Siṅghalādīp into sākhīs concerning him.² The tradition that
Gurū Nānak visited Ceylon must accordingly be rejected.

Sajjan the Thag

According to the janam-sākhīs Sajjan was a robber who posed
 as a pious philanthropist in order to lure unsuspecting travellers
 to their death.³ It is an exceedingly popular story and appears
 in some form or other in all the janam-sākhīs,⁴ but it is one
 which we must nevertheless regard with some considerable doubt.

¹ 'Bābā jī bahut din uḥā rahīā. Bahutu bāṇī pragaṭī karī Prān Saṅgalī
 uḥā hī pragaṭī karī hai. Bahutu Sikhu kite haini. Jitanī dharatī
 samundra ke ure hai aisi dharatī samundra ke pare hai. Us nagarī
 kā rājā Śivanābh thā piā uḥ mulaku sagalā vāh vāhu kari uḥiā. Ji
 vāh vāh Bābā Nānaku vāh uḥā usahī dharatī ke rāje kau vaḍai dāi.
 Us rāje dharamasālā baṁdhī hai. Sabadu diṛaiā. Sau maṇu lūṇu us
 rāje kī rasoī paratā hai. Us dharatī kau nisatār kari bāṇī pasār
 kari tab Gurū Bābā Nānaku aiā. Sākhī sampūran hoī.' IO Library
 Ms Panj. B40, folios 153b-154a.

² It appears that the Miharbān Janam-sākhī also supports the theory
 that Siṅghalādīp was introduced into an earlier tradition. Pothī
Sach-khand, the first of the three volumes in the possession of Khālsā
College, Amritsar, and the only one to appear in print so far, omits all
 reference to either Śivanābh or Ceylon. Dr. H. S. Shan reports, how-
 ever, that Pothī Harijī, the second volume, opens with a discourse be-
 tween Gurū Nānak and Rājā Śivanābh, and the brief extract which he
 quotes indicates that the goṣṭ is given no explicit setting. Harnām
 Singh Shan, art. "Ik Mahan Gad-rachanā" published in the Souvenir of
the 7th All-India Panjabi Conference, 1961, pp. 51 ff.

In the first place, the janam-sākhīs disagree concerning the location of the incident. The Purātan version names no place at all, but implies that it must have been in or near the Pañjāb as the meeting is set between Gurū Nānak's departure from Sultānpur and his arrival in Pāṇipat. This could conceivably be held to accord with the Bhāī Bālā account which gives "near Tulāmbā in the district of Multān" as the site.¹ The Bhāī Bālā version differs radically from that of the Purātan janam-sākhīs in other respects, but almost all accounts, while rejecting the substance of the Bhāī Bālā sākhī, accept it as far as this single detail is concerned.²

(cont.)

³Mih JS, gost. 73, pp. 235-38; Pur JS, sākhī 13, pp. 21-22; GR, sākhī 73, pp. 207-10; BB JS, sākhī 63, p. 290-94. See supra pp.199,247.

⁴Bhāī Gurdās does not refer to it.

¹BB JS, conclusion of sākhī 62, p.290. The town is also called Makh-dūmpur. (MK, pp. 109, 703). It is located in Kabīrvālā tahsīl and was an important centre of religious learning during the fourteenth century. (A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c., vol. i, p. 678 n.l.) It was sacked by Timur in 1398 and again by Sheikh 'Alī of Kabul in 1431. (K.S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanate, pp. 13, 96.)

²

Cf MK, p.109; Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.6; Gopāl Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, vol. i, p.xxxvii. These accounts all follow the Purātan version of the story, adding the name Tulāmbā from the Bhāī Bālā version, or perhaps from Santokh Singh's Nānak Prakāś (canto 35:66). The modern Bhāī Bālā JSs drop the earlier Bhāī Bālā version and follow the Purātan account instead. (Munshī Gulāb Singh and Sons, 1942 edition, sākhī 67, pp. 269-70.)

No such compromise is possible, however, in the case of the Miharbān and Gyān-ratanāvalī versions. The latter names Hastināpur as the location of the incident¹ and Miharbān sets it in "the south country".² The precise location is not named in Miharbān's account, but is evidently intended to be somewhere between Rāmeshwaram and Ujjain. It is clear that no definite geographical location can be assigned to the incident and that it should properly belong to the group of miscellaneous sākhīs which do not have a precise setting.³

The janam-sākhīs also differ with regard to the actual content of the story, although in the case of the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs and the Gyān-ratanāvalī these other differences are of little significance. The Purātan version calls Sajjan a sheikh and records that he maintained a temple and a mosque in order to accommodate both Hindus and Muslims.⁴ The Miharbān account, on the other hand, gives him no title and makes no reference to either a temple or a mosque, merely describing a handsome dharmasālā.

¹GR, p.207. The anachronistic appearance of the ancient Kuru capital can doubtless be traced to the Mahābhārata. The remains of the city are in Meerut District.

²Mih JS, p.235.

³Nos. 101-127 on the chart.

⁴Pur JS, p.21.

which had separate water supplies for Hindus and Muslims.¹ The Gyan-ratanāvalī adds that Gurū Nānak was aware of Sajjan's intentions, having been surreptitiously informed by a bystander as he entered the city that Sajjan was in reality a thag. The same informant added that Sajjan was also in league with the local rājā who customarily received half of the loot.²

These are essentially differences of detail and there can be no doubt that all three accounts are relating a common tradition. The Bhāi Bālā version, however, offers much more pronounced variations and indeed the sakhī it records is not really the same incident. Sajjan's disguise is described as that of a Vaiṣṇava, not of a sheikh, and although he is obviously intended to be a scoundrel there is no reference to his being a thag. Nor is there any mention of his maintaining a temple and a mosque, of his throwing his victims into a well, or of subsequently building a dharmsālā.³ His practice was evidently to do no more than steal his guests' clothes, for this is what he did to Mardānā's son.⁴ The only real links with the story as recorded in the other three versions are his name and his

¹Mih JS, p.235.

²GR, p.207.

³The BB JS, p.290, refers to the temple and mosque, but the B41 manuscript does not. (IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 183b).

⁴Khazān Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol. i, p.95. follows this version.

sudden conversion as a result of hearing Gurū Nānak sing the pad Sūhī 3.¹

Normally a variant of this kind would do no more than suggest that the Bhāi Bālā version can be safely discarded in favour of the accounts given in the other three janam-sākhī traditions. In this particular case, however, the difference is more important, or rather the small area of agreement is important. The story given in the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs and the Gyan-ratanāvalī on the one hand, and the different story given in the Bhāi Bālā version on the other, both have as their key point Gurū Nānak's singing of Sūhī 3. This is significant for Sūhī 3 contains references which might well indicate the genesis of both stories. The pad begins:

Ujala kaihā chilankaṇā ghoṭima kālaṛī masu;
Dhotiājūṭhi na utarai je sau dhovā tisu.²

Bronze shines brightly, but if I rub it,
blackness (like) ink (comes off it). Even if
I clean it a hundred times (outer) cleaning
will never remove its inner impurity.

The message which this and subsequent figures convey is that ultimate exposure must inevitably overtake all dissemblers who seek to conceal inner impurity behind an outward show of piety. The re-

¹AG, p.729.

²Ibid.

frain then follows:

Sajana sei nāli mai chaldia nāli chalanhi;¹
Jithai lekha māngiai tithai khare dasanhi.

They are my real friends who accompany me (now)
and who will accompany me (into the hereafter);
who, in that place where accounts are called for,
will stand up and give (a good) account (of their
deeds).
de

The word used here for 'friends' is sajjan, and it seems likely that the message of the pad, together with the word sajjan, led to two separate stories, both concerning an impostor called Sajjan. This cannot be affirmed categorically, but it is at least a strong possibility. Insofar as the two stories agree their agreement may be traced directly to the pad, and it is when they move out into details which are independent of the pad that they diverge.

There are accordingly good grounds for questioning the authenticity of the story and to these we may add the fact that Bhāi Gurdās makes no reference either to the incident or to a person called Sajjan. This is not surprising as far as the account of Gurū Nānak's travels given in Var 1 is concerned, but had the tradition been a firm one a reference to Sajjan might well have appeared in Var 11.² The sakhī cannot be dismissed as totally impossible and nor can we rule

¹AG, p.729.

²Bhāi Gurdās's list of Gurū Nānak's more prominent followers. (Var 11, pauris 13-14). See supra pp.190-1.

out the possibility of a link with an earlier tradition concerning an encounter with a thief of some kind. As it stands, however, it must be classified with the improbable sākhīs.

The Gurū's Laṅgar

The story of Sajjan the thag provides a convenient opportunity to discuss the question of whether or not Gurū Nānak was the founder of the distinctive Sikh institution called the laṅgar. Every Sikh gurdwārā has attached to it an intercommunal refectory in which food is served on certain occasions and in which people of all communities and castes eat together.¹ This is the laṅgar. It seems clear that the institution was developed as a direct challenge to caste exclusiveness, but it is less clear which of the Gurūs was responsible for its development as such.²

The claim that Gurū Nānak was the founder of the laṅgar is defended by reference to incidents in the janam-sākhīs and to certain extracts from his works. The story of Sajjan is quoted in this context as two of the janam-sākhī accounts³ record that Sajjan, after

¹Frequently in the large gurdwārās, less frequently in the smaller ones.

²The following writers maintain that Gurū Nānak was the founder: Parkāsh Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.10; Tejā Singh, Sikhism, p.111, and Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism, p.20; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.43; G. S. Chhabra, The Advanced Study in the History of the Punjab, vol. i, p.103. Principal Tejā Singh later revised his opinion. In his article "The Religion of the Sikh Gurus" in The Cultural History of India, vol. iv, p.314, he names Gurū Amar Dās as the founder.

³The Hafizabād Ms (Macauliffe's edition, p.53) and the Mih JS, p.238.

his conversion, built a dharmśālā and on the basis of the Purātan chronology Sikh tradition accepts this as the first gurdwārā.¹

There is, however, nothing in this to indicate that such a dharmśālā would have included the anti-caste institution called the laṅgar. Even if we overlook both the fact that the Colebrooke, Mani Singh, and Bhai Bālā janam-sākhīs omit reference to such a dharmśālā and also the doubt which attends the whole incident, there is still nothing to suggest that a dharmśālā of this kind would necessarily include a laṅgar. The same point applies to all other dharmśālās which appear in the janam-sākhīs and it applies also to the Purātan statement that Gurū Aṅgad, when as Lahinā he first became a Sikh, used to scour the pots.² There is no indication that these pots belonged to an intercommunal refectory.

In the same manner the extracts which are quoted from Gurū Nānak's works lack any reference to such an institution. A passage such as Vār Sāraṅg, ślok 1 of paurī 22,³ does commend charity and there are others which condemn caste exclusiveness, but none of them refers to an institution such as Gurū Amar Dās maintained. In Vār

¹Macauliffe, i.47; Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, op.cit., p.6.

²Pur JS, sākhī 53, p.107.

³AG, p.1245. See infra p.568.

Rāmakalī by Rāi Balvaṇḍ and Sattā the Dūm it is said of Gurū Aṅgad that, following Gurū Nānak,

Laṅgaru chalai Gura Sabadi Hari toṭi na āvī khaṭīai.¹

He maintained a laṅgar (in which) the Gurū's Śabad (was distributed, a commodity) from God which comes in never-failing supply.

Here, however, it is a laṅgar which is operated Gura Sabadi, by means of the Gurū's Śabad, and Professor Sāhib Singh is doubtless correct in referring to it in this context as Nām dā laṅgar.²

The same applies to the line which occurs in the following paurī:

Laṅgari daulati vaṇḍīai rasu amritu khīri ghiālī.³

In (Gurū Aṅgad's) laṅgar riches were distributed
- the flavour of amrit and khīr⁴ prepared with ghi.

Here it is amrit which is being dispensed. Even if the reference to khīr cooked with ghi be taken literally there is still no indication of an intercommunal refectory.

Gurū Nānak was unquestionably opposed to notions of caste exclusiveness and it is possible that he used his kitchen as a practical means of expressing this opposition. There is, however, no evidence of his having done so and accordingly it seems probable

¹Paurī 2, AG pp. 966-7.

²Sāhib Singh, Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib Darapan, vol. vii, p.231.

³AG, p.967.

⁴A sweet rice pudding.

that the founder of the institution was the third Gurū, Amar Dās. Gurū Amar Dās is credited with having established regular financial support for the laṅgar through his mañjīs.¹ It appears that he should also be credited with having first developed it as an institution expressly intended to combat caste distinctions.

The Discourse on Mount Sumeru

The discourse with the Siddhs on Mount Sumeru is one of only two incidents which are to be found in Bhāī Gurdās and in all of the janam-sākhīs.² This indicates a very strong tradition and one which cannot be lightly set aside. When Bhāī Gurdās and all of the janam-sākhīs unite in testifying to a particular claim we shall need compelling arguments in order to dismiss it.

In this case, however, the arguments which must be brought against the tradition do compel us to reject it. First, there is the mythical location which is given as the setting for the dis-

¹See supra p. 208, n.1.

²The Mecca visit (nos. 78-79) is the other. The Achal Baṭālā discourse (no. 90) may be a third. Miharbān's Pothī Sach-khaṇḍ terminates before reaching the period in which the discourse is set by the other versions and it is possible that the incident appears in Pothī Harijī, the second part of the complete Miharbān Janam-sākhī. (See supra p.108.) The association with Daulat Khan Lodi, though not treated as an incident in Bhāī Gurdās, is also referred to by all the sources. See supra pp. 349-50.

course. Mount Sumeru exists only in legend, not in fact.¹ It has been maintained that in this context Mount Sumeru represents Mount Kailash,² but this is a claim which cannot possibly be sustained. The arguments which have been advanced in support of this identification are, first, a Purāṭan reference to Mahādeo (Śiv) as one of Gurū Nānak's interlocutors;³ secondly, Bhāī Gurdās's account of how the Siddhs sent the Gurū to draw water from a lake;⁴ and thirdly, the reported discovery of images of Gurū Nānak in the Kailash area. The Purāṭan insertion of Mahādeo's name before that of Gorakhnāth is clearly a later addition to the tradition for neither Bhāī Gurdās nor Miharbān include it. Bhāī Gurdās's description of a lake, which has been held to refer to Mānasa-sarovara,⁵ must be rejected on rational grounds. Lake

¹Mount Sumeru or, more commonly, Mount Meru is the legendary mountain said to be situated in the centre of the earth. According to the geographical system of the Purāṇas, the earth was flat and from its central point there arose this mountain. Seven continents (dvīpas) lay in concentric circles around it. The inmost of the seven, which was attached to Mount Meru and which included Bhāratavarṣa (India) was named Janmbudvīpa. The summit was believed to reach to the heavens and the sun and planets revolved around it. The Hīmalayas were said to be the foothills of Mount Meru. A. L. Basham, The Wonder that was India, pp. 320, 488-9.

The influence of this Puranic mythology is to be found in all the JSs, but in varying degrees. In the Miharbān JS it is relatively weak and in Bhāī Bala JS very strong.

²Vir Singh in his edition of Santokh Singh's Nānak Prakāś, vol. iii, p.689, n. * . Kartār Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, p.190.

³Pur JS, p.94. Vir Singh, op.cit., p.690 n. Kailash was believed to be the location of Śiv's paradise.

⁴Var 1:31. See supra p.181.

⁵Vir Singh, op.cit. p.690 n. Kartār Singh, op.cit., pp. 190, 194.
(cont.)

Mānasa is not filled with jewels in the manner related by the poet. The third justification concerns the report of an expedition which visited Lake Mānasa and claimed to have discovered images of Gurū Nānak in the four cave temples around the lake.¹ If in fact such images did exist they would certainly have been introduced by sādhus at a later date.²

The second argument which must be brought against the tradition is the legendary nature not just of its location, but also of the story itself. Gurū Nānak and Gorakhnāth could not possibly have been contemporaries, nor can it be claimed that the person referred to as Gorakhnāth must have been a Nāth yogī who bore the same name as the sect's founder. The names given to his companions plainly indicate that their origin is to be found in the popular tradition of the eighty-four immortal Siddhs. Bhāī Gurdās makes this explicit.³

The manner in which this legendary basis is developed varies in the different versions, but in all cases the development shares the nature of the basis. Miharbān relates discourses which surpass

(cont.) The Pur JS, p.94, includes the same legend, but without specifying a lake as the source of water.

¹Vir Singh, op.cit., pp. 691-2 n. Sewārām Singh, The Divine Master, pp. 139-41.

²Sewārām Singh also claims as evidence of Gurū Nānak's visit an oral report that the people who worship these images were aware that "the Great Master had appeared in Ten Forms and had founded the Great Tirath at Amritsar." (Op. cit., p.140). Such information could hardly have been derived from Gurū Nānak himself.

³See supra p. 179.

in length anything he offers elsewhere. Bhāī Gurdās sets out a denunciation of the degeneracy of life on the plains below and concludes with the miracle of the lake of jewels. The Purātan janam-sākhīs relate the story of the jewels and also a miraculous departure from the mountain. The Bhāī Bālā version produces in this and the other associated sākhīs its most sustained flight of Puranic fancy.

The third objection is the existence of an obvious explanation for the genesis of the whole tradition. There appears to be no doubt that the basic sākhī which has provided the foundation for all subsequent expansion of the tradition must have developed out of the śloks from Vār Rāmakalī which the janam-sākhīs set in the centre of the discourse.¹ This particular point has already been discussed as an illustration of the manner in which much of the janam-sākhī material must have evolved.² In the śloks from Vār Rāmakalī Gurū Nānak speaks successively as Īsar, Gorakh, Gopīchand, Charapaṭ, Bharatharī, and finally as himself. A discourse with yogīs was obviously implied, and the names used by Gurū Nānak seemed to indicate that these yogīs were none other than the famous Gorakhnāth and other celebrated Siddhs. Around this nucleus there gathered

¹Vār Rāmakalī, śloks 2-7 of paurī 12. AG pp. 952-3.

²See supra pp. 70-2.

details drawn from Puranic and Nāth mythology, and the result was the legend of the Mount Sumeru discourse as we find it in Bhāī Gurdās and the janam-sākhīs. All accounts have the same nucleus. They differ only in the nature and the quantity of the detail which has been added.

The Mount Sumeru sākhīs provide us with a tradition which appears in all versions, but which must nevertheless be wholly rejected. This is not to say that Gurū Nānak never visited the Himālayas, nor indeed can we maintain with assurance that he did not penetrate as far as Mount Kailash and Lake Mānasa. The conclusion to which our analysis points is that Bhāī Gurdās and the janam-sākhīs do not provide us with acceptable evidence of such a visit, and that accordingly it cannot be a part of the biography which we are seeking to reconstruct.

Mecca and Medina

We may begin our examination of the Mecca and Medina sākhīs by drawing the customary distinction between the content of the tradition and its geographical setting. In this case, however, we are not required to sweep away the former as pure legend and concentrate our efforts solely on the basic question of whether or not Gurū Nānak actually visited the places named in the sākhīs. The latter question

remains our primary one, but the content of this group of sākhīs raises an independent issue, and one which may possibly have an authentic incident as its origin.

The issue arising from the actual content of the tradition concerns the miraculous element which all versions offer in varying form, and in particular their accounts of the moving mosque which in most versions constitutes the climax of the episode. Apart from this central element the miraculous features include such incidents as an instantaneous journey to Mecca,¹ a cloud which followed the Gurū,² and an issue of fresh water in the city's wells.³ These minor wonders may be dismissed without further discussion, but not the central miracle. The Purātan janam-sākhīs, the Gyan-ratanāvalī, and the B40 manuscript all record that Gurū Nānak, after arriving in Mecca, went to sleep with his feet pointing towards the miharāb or, in the case of the Purātan version, towards "Meccā".⁴ A qāzī who happened to observe him kicked him and demanded an explanation for such blasphemy.⁵ In reply the Gurū suggested that the

¹Mih JS, p.453. See supra pp. 257-8

²Pur JS, p.99.

³Ibid., pp. 99, 104. (See supra p. 224.) BB JS, p.187.

⁴See supra p. 223

⁵Bhāī Gurdās calls him Jīvan (Vār 1:32), the Purātan JSs call him Rukandīn (Pur JS, p.100), and the Ms B40 refers to him as the grandson of Makhdūm Bahāuddīn of Multān (folio 53). The GR, p.412, follows Bhāī Gurdās.

qāzī should drag his feet round and leave them pointing in a direction where God and the Ka'bah were not. The qāzī proceeded to do so, but when he moved the Gurū's legs the miharāb moved with them. Confounded by this miracle the qāzī fell at his feet.¹

This story has been rationalised by terminating it at the point where Gurū Nānak suggests that the qāzī should point his feet in a direction where God is not.² Normally such interpretations must be regarded as efforts to reconcile the janam-sākhī accounts with rational criteria, without disturbing the substance of the biographies they offer. In this particular case, however, the rationalised interpretation can claim a measure of support from the Miharbān Janam-sākhī, for in this account the incident is related without the concluding miracle. The Miharbān Janam-sākhī places the incident not in Meccā, but in a village on the way, and relates it as follows:

Having seen the bustle of Multān City he proceeded on pilgrimage to Meccā. On the way there was a maulānā's village. Reaching it he entered the mosque and went to sleep in the mosque with his shoes on and with his feet in the direction of the Ka'bah. That town belonged to a qāzī. The head of that town where the mosque was located was a mullāh. The mullāh was the master of that town. At the hour of the second prayer he came into the mosque with many Muslim people

¹ Bhāi Gurdās, Vār 1:32. Pur JS, pp. 99-102. IO Library. Ms Panj. B40, folios 51-53.

² This rationalised version is common in modern accounts of the incident, but it is also to be found much earlier. W. L. M'Gregor's History of the Sikhs, published in 1846, relates the story in this manner (op. cit., vol. i, pp. 36, 159-60).

to stand and recite the prayer. And he said, 'Friends! Here is a boor who has entered God's mosque with his shoes on and has gone to sleep with his feet in the direction of the Ka'bah the house of God. Make him stand up.' The people rushed forward, seized him, and made him stand up. (The mullāh said,) 'Servant of God, why have you gone to sleep in the house of God with your shoes on? You should leave your shoes in the courtyard and come in (without them).' Bābā Nānak, the bhagat, replied, 'Bābā Sahib, turn my shoes in that direction where the house of God will not go. Place my shoes in that direction where the Ka'bah is not. Do as you see fit.' He said, 'We shall first say the namāz and then we shall seize him and take him outside.'

And so the mullāh recited namāz and hymns, and when he had finished he called Bābā Nānak and said, 'Now stupid fellow, you know that God is the God of all places. He made this place¹ as well. Why do you show disrespect to it?² You deserve punishment for having blasphemed this place.' Then the mullāh said, 'Go and throw him into jail'. Bābā Nānak then said, 'Mullāh, hear my request. Whether you cast me into your own jail or into God's, the grave, hear the single petition of a faqīr.' He replied, 'Speak.' He said, 'Sinful man, you who are called a mullāh! God is the true mullāh. How can you be described as a mullāh? Then Bābā Nānak uttered a śabad in Sirī Ragu:

He is the Mullāh who has caused the world
to blossom and be verdant.....³

After hearing the pad and its exposition the defeated mullāh withdrew to the local graveyard where he died and was buried. Gurū Nānak and

¹I.e. the Ka'bah.

²Literally: reject it.

³Mih JS, p.449. The pad is Sirī Ragu 28, AG p.24.

Mardānā then proceeded on their way.¹

It will be noted that Gurū Nānak's reply is not the one given by modern rationalised accounts. In its own way, however, it is a relatively rational version and one which may possibly have some basis in fact. Without this Miharbān version we should be constrained to regard the entire incident as just another miracle story. The Miharbān account does not establish an historical basis, but it does indicate that beside the miracle story there existed a rational tradition which may point back to such a basis. It also indicates that the tradition need not necessarily be connected with Mecca, and this possibility is strengthened by the Bhāī Bālā location of the incident in Medina² and by the Purātan statement that Gurū Nānak went to sleep with his feet pointing towards "Mecca".³ The Purātan statement may be intended to refer to the Ka'bah, but it may also indicate an original setting away from the city.

All of this concerns the superstructure and it offers only limited help as far as the basic question is concerned. Did Gurū Nānak visit Mecca and Medina? Regardless of the actual content of

¹Mih JS, p.450.

²IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 122a. According to this version Gurū Nānak and Bhāī Bālā both committed the alleged offence. Their feet are said to have been pointing towards Muhammad's gor (tomb). See supra p. 136.

³Pur JS, p.100. See supra p.223,n. 1 . The Ms B40 has miharāb (folio 51).

the tradition, can its geographical basis be accepted?

In support of the tradition there is the fact that its more significant portion is referred to by all of our sources. There is no reference to Medina in the Miharbān and Purātan versions, but the janam-sākhīs all record a visit to Mecca and Bhāī Gurdās supports them. This means that once again we have a strong tradition and one which cannot be lightly dismissed. The Mount Sumeru sākhīs show, however, that a unanimity of this kind is not in itself sufficient to place an incident beyond question and the Mecca sākhīs reinforce this conclusion.

The arguments which can be brought against the Mecca tradition are not compelling to the point of absolute certainty, but they are sufficiently strong to raise very grave doubts. In the first place there is the inherent improbability of a non-Muslim entering the city in the manner indicated by the janam-sākhīs. The janam-sākhīs do indeed inform us that Gurū Nānak dressed for the occasion as a Muslim pilgrim, but they also describe additional articles of apparel which implied Hindu affiliations and confused his fellow pilgrims.¹ If we accept the possibility of such a visit we must also accept a complete disguise. This Gurū Nānak may have worn, but it implies a measure of conscious deception which is altogether uncharacteristic of him.

¹Pur JS, p.98. In Miharbān's account it is the Gurū's name which marks him as a non-Muslim. (Mih JS, p.451.)

A second reason for questioning the tradition is the fact that Mecca and Medina are precisely the kind of places which one would expect to find figuring in the popular versions of the Gurū's travels. We have already observed how prominently the chief centres of Hindu pilgrimage figure in the descriptions of his journeys beyond the Pañjāb. In the same manner it is to be expected that the principal Muslim centres would also appear in the itinerary. This in itself does not prove that Gurū Nānak did not visit Mecca, but it does provide an alternative theory to account for the genesis of the Mecca and Medina sākhīs.

Thirdly, we must note the dominant element of the miraculous in all versions of the story, including that of Bhāī Gurdās. The conclusion which we must draw from this feature is that, despite their unanimity concerning the actual visit, the janam-sākhī descriptions of what took place during the visit cannot possibly be trusted. Their accounts of the discourses which Gurū Nānak held in the city indicate the same conclusion. Such discourses would have divulged his identity at once and brought instant death.

The first of these three arguments is the significant one and it is an argument which must lead us very near to outright rejection of the tradition. Adventurers such as Burton and Keane have proved the possibility of non-Muslims entering Mecca, but they have also shown that success in such an attempt could be attained only

by means of a thorough disguise, both in outward appearance and in behaviour.¹ Gurū Nānak would doubtless have been sufficiently conversant with Muslim beliefs and practices to have sustained the disguise, but it would have been a violation both of his manifest honesty and of his customary practice of plain speaking. We may acknowledge a visit to Mecca as a possibility, but it must be regarded as an exceedingly remote one. The same reasons apply with only slightly less emphasis to the tradition of a Medina visit and in this case the absence of such a visit in the Miharbān and Purātan accounts provides an additional argument for rejection. The Mecca and Medina sākhīs must accordingly be classified as highly improbable.

The Visit to Baghdad

References to a Baghdad visit occur in two of the older janam-sākhīs. Of these the earlier is evidently the sākhī describing such a visit which is to be found in the India Office Library manuscript B40.² This sākhī records a discourse with Sheikh Sharaf who, according to this account, dressed in women's clothing, and applied añjan to his eyes and henna to his hands.³ The discourse which the sākhī records consists almost entirely of a recitation by Gurū Nānak of three

¹R. F. Burton, A Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Mecca, vol. ii.
J. F. Keane, Six Months in the Hejaz.

²IO Library Ms B40, folios 200-202.

³The sākhī begins: 'Sākhī gosṭ Sekh Saraf nāli hoī. Tab ik same Bābā Bagadād sahar vich jāi nikalia. Dekhe tā Sekh Saraf solā sīgār kītesu.' Ibid., folio 200.

chaupads in Rāg Dhanāsarī, none of which are to be found in the Ādi Granth.

The second reference occurs in Bhāī Gurdās's Var 1 where two paurīs are devoted to a description of an incident in Baghdad.¹ Bhāī Gurdās's account bears no resemblance whatsoever to the B40 sākhī. Instead it records how Gurū Nānak, having arrived with Mardānā at the outskirts of the city, set up camp and then proceeded to utter the call to prayer. Hearing this the astonished inhabitants of the city fell silent, and Gurū Nānak was approached by a pīr who asked him to what order of faqīrs he belonged. A discussion ensued and in the course of it Gurū Nānak assured the pīr that there exist lākhs of worlds both below and above the earth. To prove this he took the pīr's son and, ascending with him into the air, revealed to him the multitude of heavens and underworlds. From above they descended into the nether regions and brought from there a bowl of karāh prasād.² Gurū Nānak and Mardānā then left Baghdad and proceeded on their way to Medina and Mecca.³

This is the testimony of the janam-sākhīs and it cannot be regarded as a strong one. In the first place there is the absence of any

¹Var 1:35-36. See supra p.183 . The GR follows this account.

²The sacramental food of the Sikhs.

³This line appears to be the implication of the first line of paurī 37. The GR (p.433) explicitly states that they travelled to Medina from Baghdad.

reference to such a visit in the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs. It is most unlikely that either would have omitted the tradition had it been known, and in this respect Miharbān's omission is of particular significance. Secondly, there is the fact that the B40 manuscript and Bhāī Gurdās record completely different traditions, the only point in common being the Baghdad location. Thirdly, neither of the traditions appears to offer an intrinsically convincing incident. Within the total range of janam-sākhī traditions Sheikh Sharaf is a ubiquitous figure who is to be found not only in Baghdad, but also in Pāṇipat,¹ Bidar,² and Mecca.³ In Bhāī Gurdās's account Dastgīr is the name given to the pīr with whom Gurū Nānak is said to have held discourse. Dastgīr is one of the more important of the numerous names given to the celebrated Sūfī 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī⁴ and it seems clear that the name given by Bhāī Gurdās may be traced to this source. 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī spent most of his long life in Baghdad and subsequently came to be highly honoured in India as the Pīr-i-pīrān.⁵

¹See supra p. 298.

²IO Library Ms B41, folio 187a. See supra p. 136.

³The Nasīhat-nāmā which follows the Bhāī Bālā JS in the IO Library Ms B.41 names Sheikh Sharaf as one of the two Muslims with whom Gurū Nānak conversed in Mecca (Ms B41, folio 254).

⁴'Abd al-Qādir of Jīlān, born 470 H (AD 1077-8), died 561 H (AD 1166), was the founder of the important Qādirī order of Sūfis. Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition), vol. i, p.71. See also J. A. Subha, Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines, p.178. The Qādirī order is particularly influential in India. A. J. Arberry, Sufism, p.85.

⁵J. A. Subhan, op.cit., p.264. The order was established in India in the fifteenth century by Sayyid Muḥammad Ghawth, tenth in the line of succession. He settled in Uch in AD 1428. Ibid.

If this identification is correct the conclusion must be that we have in this Baghdad tradition another example of an association with a saint of acknowledged fame, introduced in order to magnify the fame of the Gurū. This is not to suggest that Bhaī Gurdās has advanced a deliberate falsehood. The likelihood appears to be that he has recorded a sākhī which had already evolved in oral tradition, gathering in the process a number of miraculous details. The silence of the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs indicates, however, that it could not have gained wide currency.

By itself the testimony of the janam-sākhīs would lead us to classify the Baghdad visit as improbable. In this particular case, however, the janam-sākhīs do not appear to stand alone. As in the case of the Dacca visit the authenticity of the Baghdad tradition has, it is generally believed, been established by the discovery of external evidence. Two inscriptions are said to have been found in Baghdad, both of them recording a visit to the city by Gurū Nānak.

For one of these two inscriptions we are bound to rely solely upon a poem published in 1919. In that year Swāmī Ānand Āchārya, who spent his later years living in Norway, published a book of English verse entitled Snow-birds, and in this collection he included the following poem:

ON READING AN ARABIC INSCRIPTION IN A SHRINE
OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF BAGHDAD, DATED 912 HEJIRA

Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit,
 discoursing of fraternal love and holy light,
 O Guru Nanak, Prince among India's holy sons!
 What song from the source of the Seven Waters thou
 didst sing to charm the soul of Iran!
 What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests
 thou didst carry to the vine-groves and rose-
 gardens of Baghdad!
 What light from Badrinath's snowy peak thou didst
 bear to illumine the heart of Balol, thy saintly
 Persian disciple!
 Eight fortnights Balol hearkened to thy words on Life
 and the Path and Spring Eternal, while the moon
 waxed and waned in the pomegranate grove beside
 the grassy desert of the dead.
 And after thou hadst left him to return to thy
 beloved Bharata's land, the fakir, it is said,
 would speak to none nor listen to the voice of
 man or angel;
 His fame spread far and wide and the Shah came to
 pay him homage - but the holy man would take no
 earthly treasures nor hear the praise of kings
 and courtiers.
 Thus lived he - lonely, devoted, thoughtful - for
 sixty winters, sitting before the stone whereon
 thy sacred feet had rested;
 And ere he left this House of Ignorance he wrote
 these words upon the stone: "Here spake the Hindu
 Guru Nanak to Fakir Balol, and for these sixty
 winters, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of
 Balol has rested on the Master's word - like a bee
 poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose."¹

¹Loc.cit., no. XC, pp. 182-4.

This is the complete text. The author gives no further information concerning the location of the inscription or the circumstances under which it was discovered, and no one has subsequently found anything which corresponds to it.

In the case of the second inscription, however, the location is known and the inscription is accessible. To the south-west of modern Baghdad, in the area occupied by the ruins of Old Baghdad, there is to be found the tomb of Bahlul Dānā, believed to have been the court jester of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Niebuhr described it as follows:

Pas loin de là (the tomb of Zobeida) se trouve le tombeau, d'un nommé Bahlul Dāne qui étoit parent du Calife Harun Erraschid et son bouffon. On a de lui tout un livre rempli de petites historiettes, que de pauvres savans racontent encore le soir dans les Caffés. Dans l'inscription inserée au bas de cette page¹ que l'on n'a mise sur son tombeau, que long temps après sa mort, en 501, on le nommoit le Sultan des pauvres en esprit; mais suivant quelques histoires que l'on rapporte de lui il paroît avoir aussi eu ses intervalles de bon sens.²

This tomb is now housed in a small two-roomed building. In 1916 some Sikh soldiers discovered in this building a small inscription which, it is claimed, makes explicit mention of Gurū Nānak.³ The in-

¹ Hādha qabr sulṭān al-majdhūbīn wa'l-nafs al-muḥmasa sanat khumsumāyah wa-wahīd.

² Carsten Niebuhr, Voyage en Arabie et en d'autres pays circonvoisins (French translation, 1776), tome ii, pp. 245-6. See also J. Oppert, Expédition Scientifique en Mésopotamie, tome i, p.98, and C. Huart, Histoire de Bagdad dans les Temps Modernes, Intro. p.xii. Niebuhr, op.cit., tab. XLIV, provides a map of Bagdad which shows the tomb of Bahlul Dana as no. 13. The legend has been omitted in Niebuhr, but is supplied in Huart's reproduction of the same map.

scription is set above a niche in the north-eastern corner of the building and below it there is a platform. The discovery was first published in the January 1918 issue of the Loyal Gazette, Lahore,¹ and since that time has been accepted as conclusive proof of a visit to Baghdad by Gurū Nānak.

The language of the inscription is Ottoman Turkish and efforts to translate it have produced several different versions. Five of these translations are given below:

1. In memory of the Guru, that is the Divine Master Baba Nanak Fakir Aulia, this building has been raised anew, with the help of Seven Saints; and the chronogram reads: 'The blessed disciple has produced a spring of grace' - year 927 H.²
2. Guru Murad died. Baba Nanak Fakir helped in constructing this building which is an act of grace from a virtuous follower. 927 A.H.³
3. Murad saw the demolished building of Hazrat Rabi-Majid, Baba Nanak, Fakir Aulia, and rebuilt it with his own hands, so that historic memorial may continue from generation to generation, and His murid-i-s'eed (the blessed disciple) may obtain heavenly bliss. - Year 917 H. ⁴

(cont.)

³A description of the building, together with a diagram of it, is given in Sewaram Singh's The Divine Master, pp. 155-6. Photographs taken in 1964 indicate that the building is in an advanced state of decay. An indistinct photograph of the inscription is given in MK (first edition, vol. iv, p.2486) and a tracing of it is reproduced in Vir Singh's Gurū Nānak Chamatakār, vol. ii, p.664, and also in his edition of Santokh Singh's Nanak Prakāś, vol. iv, p.1053.

¹Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.34 n.20.

²Tejā Singh and Ganḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.12.

³I. Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, vol. i, p.73.

⁴Sewaram Singh, The Divine Master, p.157.

4. When Murad saw the building of Baba Nanak, the Prophet of God, fallen in ruins, he built a new one instead, with the help of his own hands so that it may stand as a monument in history for generations to come, and that the meritorious act of his fortunate disciple may last for aye.¹
5. Whoever saw this sacred place of Baba Nanak faqir was granted fulfilment of his heart's desire by the Great God and Seven Angels helped him. Its date lies in line (sic) He caused a spring of Grace to flow for His lucky disciple - year 927 H.²

The two different readings of the concluding date are the result of an obscure second figure. Normally it should be possible to determine the value of the indistinct figure by calculating the value of the chronogram, but here too there are evidently differences of opinion. Vīr Singh sets out the value of the chronogram as follows: $27 + 59 + 205 + 215 + 13 + 254 + 144 = 917$.³ The writers who give 927 do not offer interpretations of the chronogram.

There are accordingly radical differences concerning the translation of the inscription and a fundamental disagreement concerning the reading of the date it gives, but no account of Gurū Nānak's travels written since 1918 has disputed the basic contention that the inscription refers to Gurū Nānak and proves that he visited Baghdad. Most writers have also accepted the authenticity of Ānand Āchārya's Arabic

¹Kartār Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, p.214 n.1.

²Ibid.

³Vīr Singh, Gurū Nānak Chamatakār, vol. ii, p.664 n.*.

inscription and have inferred that the two inscriptions must describe a common event. The conclusion which follows is that Gurū Nānak conversed with "Shah Bahlol, a local fakir"¹ or with "a successor of Bahlol Dana".² Vīr Singh has offered a reconstruction based upon the two inscriptions and the account given by Bhāī Gurdās. His theory is that Gurū Nānak visited Baghdad twice. The first visit took place in AD 1506-7,³ on the way to Mecca, and on this occasion the Gurū met Bahlol. The second visit was in AD 1511-12⁴ and this time the discourse was with Dastgīr. Kānh Singh suggests a discourse with "the descendants of Pīr Dastgīr, Bahlol, and other holy men".⁵ Several writers add that the discourse took place on the platform which is to be found beneath the inscription in the building which houses the tomb of Bahlūl Dānā. This assumption is evidently based upon the location of the inscription in relation to the platform, and upon Ānand Āchārya's "slab of granite".

Of these two inscriptions the Arabic one described by Ānand Āchārya must certainly be rejected as evidence of a visit to Baghdad. An inscription corresponding to the translation which he gives has

¹Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, op.cit., p.12.

²Kartār Singh, op.cit., p.215. See also Sewāram Singh, op.cit., p.155.

³912 H, the date given by Ānand Āchārya.

⁴Vīr Singh's reading of the date on the Turkish inscription.

⁵MK (second edition), p.622.

never been discovered by anyone else, and without access to the original it is impossible to accept the Swāmī's poetic testimony as adequate evidence.

The most likely explanation of the missing original is that Ānand Āchārya's poem concerns not a separate inscription, but the one which is to be found near the tomb of Bahlūl Dānā. The Swāmī might well have known of its existence and visited its location, for his book was published three years after its discovery. The experience which he records in the title of his poem could have taken place in or shortly after 1916. Within the poem itself there are indications which point to an identification of his "Arabic inscription" with the Turkish inscription. One such pointer is the name "Balol" which he gives to the Gurū's disciple. The fact that this corresponds to the name of the court jester whose tomb lies near the Turkish inscription is much more likely to be a result of confusion than of coincidence. The reference to "a shrine outside Baghdad" also fits the Turkish inscription, and the "simple slab of granite" may well be a poetic description of the platform beneath the inscription. Bahlūl Dānā's tomb is said to be adjacent to an old cemetery,¹ a location which would explain the Swāmī's reference to "the grassy desert of the dead"; and "the pomegranate grove" may

¹Sewārām Singh, op.cit., p.155.

perhaps correspond to the garden which is shown in diagrams of the tomb and its building.¹

In view of the translation difficulties which the Turkish inscription has presented the description of it as "Arabic" need occasion no surprise, and the wording of the Swāmī's own translation probably arises from these same difficulties. If he did in fact see the Turkish inscription it would have been soon after its discovery and, consequently, prior to the more concerted efforts to produce a translation. The translation which he gives of the "words upon the stone" is probably a poetic reconstruction, from memory, of an inscription only very imperfectly understood. The likelihood that he would have written from memory could also explain the date which he gives. It seems probable that Ānand Āchārya's poem represents an imaginative reconstruction of a Baghdad discourse, based upon the writer's recollection of a visit to the tomb of Bahlūl Dānā.

This leaves us with the Turkish inscription and in this connection there are three basic questions which require answers. First, does the inscription actually refer to Gurū Nānak? Secondly, what date does it give? Thirdly, if it does refer to Gurū Nānak and if it does give a date which accords with the known events of his life, can it be accepted as authentic evidence of a visit to Baghdad? The

¹Sewārām Singh, op.cit., p.156. Vīr Singh, op.cit., vol. ii, p.663.

writer owes the following comment to Dr. V. L. Ménage, Lecturer in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

"I have examined the tracing and the rather poor photographs¹ of the inscription at Baghdād, but I am afraid that I am unable to offer you a confident reading and translation.

The language is Ottoman Turkish. The four lines rhyme aaba. The metre is — ∪ ∪ — / — ∪ — / — ∪ ∪ — / — ∪ — / . I read this much (in the Encyclopaedia of Islam system of transliteration):

Gör ne murād eyledi Ḥadret-i Rabb-i Medjīd

(five syllables) ola tā ki 'imāret djedīd

Yediler imdād edüb geldi ki ta'rīkhine

Yapdı thewāb edjr ede anı mürīd-i sa'īd

See what the Glorious Lord proposed

() that the building might be new.

The Seven gave their help (so that) there came
(as inspiration) for the chronogram of it:

'The blessed disciple performed a meritorious
work; may (God) recompense it.'

The five translations which you have shown me² are all well off the mark. I am quite certain, for example, about the following points: (1) 'Guru' arises from a misreading of Turkish gör 'see'; (2) murād is not a personal name but bears its ordinary lexical meaning, 'desire, wish'; (3) the 'hands' of versions 3 and 4 arise from misreading Turkish yediler as Arabic yad; (4) the 'springs' of versions 1 and 5 arise from misreading edjr 'recompense' as idjra 'causing to flow', and Turkish anı 'it' as Persian ab or abi 'water(y)'.
'

The last line, or part of it, is certainly a chronogram, but the calculation giving 917 (A.H., corresponding to 1511-12 A.D.) depends on reading nwāb (=59); since the

¹The photograph reproduced in the first edition of MK and another taken in 1964 at the author's request.

²The same five translations are given above, pp. 402-3.

word is certainly thwāb (=509), the total 917 is impossible. With my reading the whole line comes out to $27 + 509 + 204 + 20 + 61 + 254 + 144 = 1219$ (which corresponds to 1804-5 A.D.). In the three-figure date below, the first figure is certainly 9, the second is doubtful, the third is certainly 7. All my efforts to reconcile the chronogram with the date have failed. I can only suggest - and with little conviction - that the date is that of the founding of a building and the chronogram that of the repair mentioned in line two.

If my identification of the metre is correct, the part of line two which I cannot read contains five syllables, scanning - ∪ ∪ - -. The first letters in the tracing are clearly bābānānk; there follows a word which might be pīr, but seems rather to be a dissyllable (? fakīr). If the first syllable of Nanak must be long, then the line cannot begin Baba Nanak.....; even if it may be scanned short, Baba Nanak-i pīr contains too many syllables; Baba Nanak pīr is ungrammatical; and with none of these readings (since the 'Glorious Lord' must be God) can I construe the whole line.

That an Ottoman Turkish inscription in Baghdād should date from the early 16th century would be surprising. The reading Baba Nanak is doubtful and the date is not clear. Furthermore, it is not unfair to say that the translations so far offered, and perhaps also the reading of the tracing, have been heavily influenced by wishful thinking. Until we can obtain a good photograph, I think you should be most cautious in your approach to this problem."

From this comment it seems clear that at this stage the three basic questions arising from the inscription must all remain unanswered. Although there still exists a possibility that the inscription may constitute evidence of a Baghdad visit it is necessary, in the meantime at least, to withhold final judgment. It appears from

the metre and from the portion of the text which Dr. Ménage has deciphered and translated that our ultimate decision will probably require a definite rejection of the inscription as evidence of such a visit, but this is a conclusion which we are not yet entitled to draw with any firmness. The one conclusion which we can reach at this stage is that pending further investigation we must certainly withdraw the unqualified recognition which has hitherto been accorded to the inscription. Until such investigation can be made the Baghdad tradition must be classified with the possible sākhīs.

Bābur and the Sack of Saidpur

Bābur is the one contemporary figure of any significance who is referred to by name in the works of Gurū Nānak, and with the exception of Bhāī Gurdās's Vār 1 all the janam-sākhīs record that the Gurū was present as a witness when the Mughal army assaulted the town of Saidpur.¹ The sākhīs which offer a description of his experiences on this occasion are of very considerable importance as they provide the only reference in the janam-sākhīs to a recognisable

¹Or Sayyidpur. The early JSs refer to it as Saidpur, Saidpur Saṇḍeālī, Saidpur Sirīālī, and Saidpur Saloī (Pur JS, p.58 n.†, Mih JS, p.463). It is the modern Eminābād, 9 miles south of Gujranwālā. The GR uses the modern name (p.112).

and datable event in contemporary Indian history.

The attack upon Saidpur was made during the third of Bābur's preliminary expeditions into North India. Mrs. Beveridge has described it as follows:

a. Expedition into Hindūstān

The march out from Kābul may have been as soon as must~~er~~ and equipment allowed after the return from Lamghan chronicled in the diary. It was made through Bajaur where refractory tribesmen were brought to order. The Indus will have been forded at the usual place where, until the last one of 932 AH. (1525 AD.), all expeditions crossed on the outward march. Bhīra was traversed in which were Bābur's own Commanders, and advance was made, beyond lands yet occupied, to Siālkot, 72 miles north of Lāhor and in the Rechna dū-āb. It was occupied without resistance; and a further move was made to what the MSS. call Sayyidpūr; this attempted defence, was taken by assault and put to the sword. No place named Sayyidpūr is given in the Gazetteer of India,¹ but the Ayīn-i-akbarī mentions a Sidhpūr which from its neighbourhood to Siālkot may be what Bābur took.

Nothing indicates an intention in Bābur to join battle with Ibrāhīm at this time; Lāhor may have been his objective, after he had made a demonstration in force to strengthen his footing in Bhīra. Whatever he may have planned to do beyond Sidhpūr (?) was frustrated by the news which took him back to Kābul and thence to Qandahār, that an incursion into his territory had been made by Shāh Beg.²

¹Saidpur and Eminābad are identified in the IG, vol. 12, p.24, and also in the Gazetteer of the Gujranwala District 1893-4, p.173.

²BN(B), i.429.

According to Mrs. Beveridge this expedition was made in AD 1520.¹ If the janam-sākhīs' claim that Gurū Nānak was present at the sack of Saidpur can be established it follows that he must have returned, at least temporarily, from his travels by that year. The question then arises of whether or not this date assists us in determining the end of his period of travelling.

The janam-sākhīs relate that Gurū Nānak and Mardānā happened to reach Saidpur at a time when its Paṭhān inhabitants were celebrating numerous marriages. The Purātan version adds that on this occasion the Gurū was also accompanied by some faqīrs who were weak with hunger.² The travellers asked for food, but were everywhere refused. This so enraged the Gurū that he uttered the pad Tilaṅg 5: Jaisī mai āvai Khasama kī bāpī.³ A brāhmaṇ who, it seems, had heard the pad and who recognised it as a summons to Bābur to punish the ungenerous town, begged him to retract his curse. This the Gurū was unable to do, but he promised the brāhmaṇ that he and his family would be spared if they took refuge at a certain pool some distance outside the town.⁴ Bābur then descended upon Saidpur, sacked it, put

¹BN(B), i.428. See also Leyden and Erskine, Memoirs of Zehir-ed-Din Muhammad Baber (1st edition, 1826), p.286.

²Pur JS, p.58.

³AG, p.722.

⁴"The Chaḍḍa (śc Chaḍḍhā, a khatrī sub-caste), hold the ak sacred, because they say their forefathers once fought with Barbar near Eminabad and all fell, save one who hid under an ak bush. He refounded the section and it still performs the munnan at Eminabad and worships the ak." A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &C., vol. ii, p.518. This tradition and the JS story evidently have a common origin.

all of its inhabitants to the sword, and ravaged the surrounding countryside. All this had happened because the churlish people of the town had failed to show proper consideration towards faqīrs.

Such was the destruction which Bābā (Nānak's) śabad brought on the Paṭhāns. A Great Soul was filled with wrath and because faqīrs believe in God He hears their prayers. God hears the petitions of faqīrs and whatever is in a faqīr's heart He performs.¹

Miharbān gives the same explanation for the town's misfortune. He concludes, as usual, with a ślok of his own.

Jinā jāni na manīā fakīrān dā suālu,
Te dojaka andari māriani disai ki havālu,
Dasa Nānaka horu sabhu jhūṭhu hai sachu fakīrān
dā kḥiālu.²

Those who do not heed a faqīr's request are tormented in Hell. Behold their condition! The slave of Nānak says: the beliefs of faqīrs are true; all else is false.

After this the two principal accounts diverge. The Purātan janam-sākhī relate an interview with Bābur,³ whereas the Miharbān Janam-sākhī describes an assault by Bābur on Tīllā.⁴

¹Pur JS, p.59.

²Mih JS, p.465.

³Pur JS, pp. 62-3. The Hāfizābād JS, which relates a longer interview with Babur than the Colebrooke version, describes Bābur as a clandestine qalandar. (See supra p.213.) The TD also recounts a legend which depicts Bābur as a qalandar. This legend relates how a qalandar once visited Sultan Sikandar Lodi in Delhi. The Sultan accorded him due reverence and hospitality, and later learnt, to his great dismay, that he had missed an opportunity of capturing Bābur. The extract is translated in N. Roy's Niamatullah's History of the Afghans, Part I, p.123.

⁴A famous Kānpḥaṭ yogī centre 13 miles west of Dīnā in Jhelum District. It is variously referred to as Bālnāth kā Tīllā, Tīllā Bālgundāī, Tīllā Daṅgā, Jogīān dā Tīllā, and Gorakh Tīllā. (See G. W. Briggs, Gorakhnāth

It is at once clear that much of what the janam-sākhīs relate must be rejected. The reason they give for the destruction of the town can be dismissed on rational grounds and also because it is completely out of character as far as Gurū Nānak is concerned. Nothing in his works, including the pad which is interpreted as a curse, offers the remotest sign that he could be capable of such vindictive behaviour. Most of the extra Purātan material, which describes the actual encounter with Bābur, must also be repudiated as a legendary wonder story, and so too must the Miharbān Janam-sākhī's account of an attack upon Tillā. This latter addition is a clear example of a story which has evolved out of a reference in one of Gurū Nānak's works, in this case the fourth stanza of Āsā Aṣṭapadī 12.¹

All of this may be rejected, but it still leaves open the two basic questions. Was Gurū Nānak present during the sack of Saidpur; and did he meet Bābur?

The principal argument which has been advanced in favour of his presence at Saidpur, and one which has hitherto been accepted as conclusive, is the fact that Gurū Nānak himself refers directly to

(cont.) and the Kanphaṭa Yogīs, pp. 101 ff.) Bābur evidently camped below the village on his way into Hindustan in 1525, but the reference in the Bābur-nāma makes no mention of any encounter with the inhabitants. BN(B), ii.452-3. For the Purātan and Miharbān accounts of the whole incident see supra pp. 212 and 259 respectively.

1

AG, pp. 417-8. See infra p.414.

Bābur and describes the devastation wrought by his army. These references occur in Āsā 39,¹ Āsā Aṣṭapadī 11,² Āsā Aṣṭapadī 12,³ and Tilāṅg 5,⁴ four pads which are collectively known as the Bābar vāṇī. All four are set by the janam-sākhī in the context of either the assault on Saidpur or Gurū Nānak's interview with Bābur soon afterwards.

There can be no doubt that in these verses Gurū Nānak is describing at least one of the Mughal expeditions for he does so explicitly.

Bābar vāṇī phiri gaī kuiru na roṭī khāi.⁵

Now that Bābur's authority has been established
the princes starve.

Koṭī hū pīra varaji rahāe jā mīru suṇiā dhāiā;
Thana mukāma jāle bija mandara muchhi muchhi kuira rulāiā,
Koī Mugalu na hoā andhā kinai na parachā lāiā.⁶

Thousands of pīrs tried to stop Mīr (Bābur by means of magic) when they heard of his invasion. Resting-places were burnt, rock-like temples (were destroyed), princes were hacked into pieces and trampled in the dust. (In spite of the pīrs' efforts) no Mughal was blinded. None of the spells had any effect.

¹AG, p.360.

²AG, p.417.

³AG, p.417-8.

⁴AG, p.722-3.

⁵Āsā Aṣṭ 11(5), AG p.417.

⁶Āsā Aṣṭ 12(4), AG pp. 417-8.

Kurāsana khasamānā kīā Hindustānu ḡaraīā;
 Āpai dosu na dei Karatā Jamu kari Mugalu chaṛaīā.¹

Thou didst spare Khurāsān and spread fear in
 Hindustān. O Creator, (Thou didst this) but to
 avoid the blame Thou didst send the Mughal as
 (the messenger of) Yam.

But to which of Babur's expeditions does he refer? The indications are that the two astapadis, at least, concern the later invasions of 1524 and 1525-26. Saidpur is nowhere mentioned and the descriptions hardly accord with the limited nature of the 1520 incursion.

In the first place there is one reference which indicates that the Lodī rule had come to an end prior to the composition of the astapadi in which it occurs.

Dhanu jobanu dui vairī hoe jinhī rakhe raṅgu lāi;
 Dūtā no furamāia lai chale pati gavai;
 Je tisu bhāvai de vaḡiaī je bhāvai dei saḡai.
 Ago de je chetiai tān kaitu milai saḡai;
 Sahan surati gavaia raṅgi tamāsai chāi;
 Bābar vaṇi phiri ḡai kuiru na roḡi khāi.²

The wealth and sensual beauty which had intoxicated them became their enemies. To the messengers (of Death) the command was given to strip them of their honour and carry them off. If it seems good to Thee Thou givest glory, and if it pleases Thee Thou givest punishment. Had they paused to think in time, then would they have received the punishment? But the rulers paid no heed, passing their time instead in revelry, and now that Babur's authority has been established the princes starve.

¹Asā 39, AG p.360.

²Asā Aṣṭ 11(4-5), AG p.417.

It seems clear that the reference here must be to the Lodīs, as there are no other "rulers" or "princes" to whom it could conceivably apply. These two stanzas bring out the point which Gurū Nānak makes in all four pads. The historical incident expresses for him a religious truth. It is for him an illustration of the truth that God's justice cannot be ignored, that the divine Hukam¹ cannot be defied, that unrighteousness will be punished.² The Lodīs had acted in a manner contrary to the divine intention and they paid the inevitable penalty for having done so. This, however, must surely refer to the ultimate overthrow of the dynasty. The 1520 incursion was by no means a decisive defeat for the Lodīs and could scarcely be interpreted as the final penalty for their irresponsibility and unrighteousness.

Secondly, the description given of a battle fought by the Mughals and of the extent of the devastation caused by them does not tally with the evident nature of the 1520 expedition.³

¹See infra pp. 511 ff.

²In the case of Āsā 39 this is only a subsidiary theme and is limited to the last stanza.

Je ko nāu dharāe vaḡā sāda kare mani bhāḡe,
 Khasamai nadarī kīḡā avai jete chugai dāḡe;
 Mari mari jīvai tā kichhu pāe Nānaka nāmu vakhāḡe.

If anyone assumes an exalted name and indulges always in whatever his mind desires, he becomes as a worm in the sight of the Master regardless of how much corn he pecks up. Die (to self) and you shall truly live. Remember the Nām and you shall receive a portion.

(cont.)

Mugala Paṭhāṇā bhaī laṛāī raṇa mahi tega vagāī;
 Onhī tupaka tāṇi chalaī onhī hasati chirāī;
 Jinh kī chirī daragaha phāṭī tinhā maraṇa bhaī.
 Ika Hindavaṇī avara Turakaṇī Bhaṭiāṇī Thakuraṇī;
 Ikanhā perapa sira khura paṭe ikanhā vasu masapī;¹
 Jinh ke baṅke gharī na āia tinh kiu raṇi vihaṇī.

The Mughals and Paṭhāṇs fought each other, wielding swords on the battlefield. One side² took aim and fired guns; the other³ urged on (its) elephants. They whose letters were torn in (God's) court had to die⁴ Hindu, Muslim, Bhaṭṭ and Thakur women (suffered), some having their burgās torn from head to toe, others being slain.⁵ They whose hand-some husbands failed to return home, how did they pass the night, (what grief they must have endured)!

(cont.)

The principal theme is the question of why the weak should suffer unmerited torment at the hands of the strong and in this respect the pad has obvious affinities with the Book of Job. God is called to account, just as Job summons Him, and the conclusion which Gurū Nānak reaches is expressed in the line:

Āpe jorī vichhorē āpe vekhu terī vaḍiāī.

Thou dost unite and Thou dost divide; thus is
 Thy glory manifested.

The only solution to the problem lies in the absolute nature of the divine will and authority - absolute and ultimately beyond human comprehension. This differs from the point made in the other Babar vaṇī pads, but both themes directly concern the nature of the divine Hukam.

³See supra p. 410 , the second paragraph of Mrs. Beveridge's note.

¹Āsā Aṣṭ 12(5-6), p.418.

²The Mughals.

³The Afghāns.

⁴The reference is to the custom of making a small tear in an obituary notification. (Tejā Singh, Sabadārath, p.418 n.6)

⁵Literally: becoming inhabitants of the cremation ground.

This reads much more like a description of an important battle and the victors' subsequent devastation than simply the account of a siege. A battlefield is explicitly mentioned and the presence of elephants suggests that it was no mere skirmish. The reference to the bereaved wives whose husbands failed to return home also points to a battle rather than to an incident which involved no more than the fall of a besieged town, and the same indications appear both in the preceding stanza,¹ and in the extract quoted above from *Āsā Aṣṭapadī* 11.² The episode which appears to correspond most closely to this combination of fixed battle and subsequent devastation is the incursion of 1524. On this occasion Bābur defeated the army led by Bihār Khān Lodī which Ibrāhīm Lodī had sent to Lahore, and then sacked the city.³ Neither Talvaṇḍī nor Kartārpur is far distant from Lahore and we may assume that if Gurū Nānak were in the Pañjāb at the time he would certainly have been well acquainted with the incident.

The implied destruction of Lodī authority, together with the nature of the warfare described in the *aṣṭapadīs*, plainly suggests that these two works at least were written after 1526 and that they were prompted not by a single event, but rather by the series of events which culminated in the overthrow of the Lodī dynasty. The other two

¹See *supra* p. 417.

²See *supra* p. 415.

³BN(B), i.441. See *supra* p. 32.

pads offer no clear indications. The fact that both express the same Hukam theme as the two aṣṭapadīs may imply a date subsequent to the Lodī downfall, but the point is not brought out with sufficient clarity to enable us to attach much significance to it.¹

There are, accordingly, two principal conclusions which may be drawn from the four Bābar vāṇī compositions. The first is that Gurū Nānak must have personally witnessed devastation caused by Bābur's troops. There is in his descriptions of agony and destruction a vividness and a depth of feeling which can be explained only as expressions of a direct, personal experience. The actual battle described in Āsā Aṣṭapadī 12 may possibly be based upon hearsay, but even here one is left with an impression of close proximity to the event. The second conclusion is that the four pads were probably composed after 1526 in response to the complete series of invasions, rather than in response to any single event within the series. Āsā Aṣṭapadī 12, with its battle scene, evidently refers to a specific event, but the nature of

¹Tilaṅg 5, AG p.723, contains a line which is striking but also baffling:

Āvani aṭhatarai jāni satānavai horu bhī uṭhasī
marada kā chelā.

He will come in seventy-eight and go in ninety-seven, and another disciple of a warrior will arise.

The usual explanation is that this refers to Bābur's entry into India in S.1578 (AD 1521-2) and to Humāyun's departure in S.1597 (AD 1540). The marad kā chelā is said to refer to Sher Shāh Sur. (Teja Singh, Sabadārath, p.723 n.4.) The objections to this interpretation are that the third and fourth expeditions evidently took place in AD 1520 and 1523-24 respectively, and that although Humāyun was certainly defeated by Sher Shāh in 1540 the reference would be to an event which followed Gurū Nānak's death.

the reference points to the 1524 capture of Lahore, not to the 1520 sack of Saidpur.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that there can be no truth in the janam-sākhī tradition concerning Gurū Nānak's presence as a witness during the sack of Saidpur. The support claimed on the basis of his four pads must go, but there remain others. In the first place, the janam-sākhīs all agree on this point. Secondly, the tradition concerns an incident which happened in the Pañjāb during the latter part of the Gurū's life. Thirdly, there appears to be a measure of accuracy in the janam-sākhī descriptions of the actual assault. And fourthly, it seems reasonable to assume that had there been no factual basis for the connection with Bābur the narrators would surely have chosen the capture of Lahore or the Battle of Pañipat as a setting rather than an obscure town besieged on one of the minor expeditions. These factors indicate a strong tradition and one which has good claims to acceptance. We may conclude from the janam-sākhīs that Gurū Nānak was probably in the Pañjāb during 1520, and from the Bābar vāñī pads that he was almost certainly there in 1526.

The same cannot, however, be said for the claim that Gurū Nānak actually met Bābur. The Miharbān Janam-sākhī omits it, the Purātan janam-sākhīs give divergent accounts,¹ and the familiar ten-

¹Pur JS, p.65.

dency to introduce interviews with the acknowledged great offers a much more likely explanation of its origin.¹ It cannot be ruled out as completely impossible, but it certainly appears to be most unlikely.

The founding of Kartārpur

The sākhīs which describe the founding of Kartārpur raise two issues. First, there is the question of whether or not the account they give of the origin of the village can be accepted; and secondly, that of the incident's location within the total framework of the Gurū's travels.

In these sākhīs we have both a local setting and general agreement amongst the janam-sākhīs as far as the content of the incident is concerned, but we also have a number of minor miracles. According to the janam-sākhī accounts a certain rich official set out with the intention of apprehending the Gurū, but was persuaded to forsake enmity for reverence after being smitten on the way with blindness and other afflictions.² This aspect of the story is unacceptable, but its elimination still leaves the essence of the sākhī unaffected. With the miraculous element excluded we are left with

¹See supra, p. 298.

²See supra pp. 216, 263.

a brief account of a wealthy man who in some manner developed a great reverence for the Gurū and who gave this reverence practical expression either by building the small village of Kartārpur, or, more likely, by donating the land on which it was subsequently built, and by erecting a dharmśālā.

There can be no doubt that Kartārpur was founded during the time of Gurū Nānak for Bhāī Gurdās could not possibly have been mistaken on a point of this nature.¹ The land for such a village would have had to be procured in some manner and there is nothing which leads us to doubt the story that it was donated by a wealthy Sikh. To this simple statement of the village's origin miraculous elements were subsequently added in its oral transmission. Stripped of them the story offers no difficulties and can be accepted.

This disposes of the first question. The second one arises because the janam-sākhīs, while generally agreeing as far as the actual content of the sākhī is concerned, disagree regarding the point at which they introduce the incident. For Miharbān the founding of the village marks the completion of all the Gurū's journeys,² whereas the Hāfizābād janam-sākhī places it at the conclusion of the

¹Dharamasāla Karatārapuru sādha saṅgati sachakhaṇḍa vasāiā.

In Kartārpur (he built) a dharmśālā and in the saṅgat established (a microcosm of) Sach Khaṇḍ. - Var 24:1.

²Mih JS, p.516.

first of the Purātan's five udāsīs.¹ The Gyān-ratanāvalī offers yet another alternative by setting it at the end of the Gurū's visit to the north.²

This seems to present us with three possibilities, but in all probability there are only two. The acknowledgment of three possibilities assumes that the different travel itineraries can be compared and a decision made in favour of one of them. As we shall see, however, the likelihood is that all three must be rejected and accordingly the question at this point is whether the founding of Kartārpur took place at some unknown point during the Gurū's two decades of travel, or whether it took place after their conclusion. The Hāfizā-bād janam-sākhī and the Gyān-ratanāvalī offer the first alternative and the Miharbān Janam-sākhī the second.

There is no evidence which will either establish the one or disprove the other, but the second appears the more likely. Even if Miharbān's chronology is suspect it is at least a more likely pattern than that developed by the Purātan tradition. Moreover, this particular incident is, in a sense, outside the problem of travel chronology as far as the Miharbān version is concerned as it comes at the conclusion of the travel period. The Miharbān alternative is also more satisfact-

¹Pur JS, p.74. The Colebrooke JS lacks this sākhī.

²GR, p.401.

ory in that a sustained period of travel seems more likely than two such periods broken by an interlude of settled life at Kartārpur. We may accept that the land was donated by a wealthy follower of the Gurū, and we may add that the village was probably built after the conclusion of the Gurū's travels. This recognises the stronger likelihood of the Miharbān alternative without accord-
ing it an unqualified acceptance.

The Return to Talvaṇḍī

The sākhīs which describe Gurū Nānak's return to his home village record nothing of importance apart from the fact that he did return and that he was there reunited with his parents. Their significance lies rather in the differing points at which the janam-sākhīs introduce the incident, a question which has already been considered in connection with the founding of Kartārpur. The descriptions of Gurū Nānak's reunion with his mother are among the most beautiful passages in the janam-sākhīs.

The Visit to Pāk Paṭṭan

There seems to be little doubt that Gurū Nānak must at some time have met Sheikh Ibrāhīm, the contemporary incumbent of Sheikh Farīd's gaddī.¹ Pāk Paṭṭan was within easy reach and Sheikh Farīd's

¹For an account of the life and work of Sheikh Ibrāhīm see Lajwanti Rama Krishna, Panjabi Sufi Poets, pp. 1-11.

reputation would certainly have exercised a powerful attraction. Even without the testimony of the janam-sākhīs such a meeting might well be regarded as a likelihood. There are evident inconsistencies in the janam-sākhī descriptions of the encounter, but they are in substantial agreement as far as the principal details are concerned. It seems probable that the discourse which they record may owe more to imagination than to an actual knowledge of the event, but there is nothing which suggests that the event itself is open to doubt. Accordingly, we may accept as a strong probability the tradition concerning a meeting in Pak Patṭan with Sheikh Ibrāhīm, the contemporary successor of Sheikh Farīd.

Discourses with Siddhs

The janam-sākhīs record two famous encounters with Siddhs within or near the Pañjāb. Of these one must be regarded with some scepticism, but the other appears to be authentic if for Siddhs we read Kanphaṭ or Nāth yogīs.

The story of Gurū Nānak's disputation with the Siddhs at Gorakh-haṭṭarī¹ must be regarded with some doubt as the sākhīs which describe it in the Purātan and Miharbān versions are both unsatisfactory. In the Purātan janam-sākhī it amounts to no more than a

¹Generally identified with an elevated area in Peshāwar. MK Addendum, p.43, and A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c, vol. i, p.679.

wonder story of how the Siddhs sought to overwhelm him by assuming fearsome forms through the exercise of their occult powers.¹ It appears that such a sākhī must originally have developed without having any specific location assigned to it, for Bhāī Gurdās sets the same story in the context of the Achal Baḷālā disputation.² The Miharbān Janam-sākhī gives an entirely different description and one which is equally unsatisfactory. All that it tells us is that a mela was being held there and that Gurū Nānak held a discourse with "the gurū of the yogīs". Gurū Nānak may have visited the locality, but neither of these sākhīs can be accepted as sufficient evidence for such a visit.

The Achal Baḷālā encounter, however, has a much firmer basis. Bhāī Gurdās;³ the Purātan janam-sākhīs,⁴ the India Office Library manuscript B40,⁵ and Gyān-ratanāvalī,⁶ and the Bhāī Bala version.⁷ all record such a dispute and the fact that Achal Baḷālā is so near Kartārpur enhances the likelihood of the tradition. Bhāī Gurdās and

¹Pur JS, pp. 104-6. This version concludes with a pad which is by Gurū Arjan.

²Vār 1:41. See supra p. 187.

³Vār 1:39-44.

⁴Pur JS, sākhī 50, p.97.

⁵IO Library Ms Panj B40, folio 117. This JS records a second visit to Achal on folio 181.

⁶GR, sākhīs 170-7, pp. 463-508.

⁷BB JS, sākhī 61, p.287.

the B40 manuscript both name the occasion as a Śivarāt melā. The portion of the complete Miharbān Janam-sākhī which has been printed so far (Pothī Sach-khaṇḍ) lacks the incident, but this is to be expected as Pothī Sach-khaṇḍ ends with the gost which describes the founding of Kartārpur. As usual there are details in the various accounts which must be rejected, but the basis of the tradition appears to be well founded. Gurū Nānak's own works also offer it some support. The location is not named in any of his works, but it is clear from many of his pads that his contacts with Nāth yogis must have been frequent and it seems evident from such a work as the Siddh Gost¹ that he engaged them in formal debate.

Visits to Multān

Multān, like Pāk Paṭṭan, was a place which would almost certainly have drawn a person such as Gurū Nānak, for it too was a renowned centre of Muslim devotion within easy reach of Talvaṇḍī and Kartārpur. There is, however, nothing which may, with any assurance, be added to this assumption. In the Purātan janam-sākhīs the only reference to Multān occurs in the sākhī which describes the death of Makhdūm Bahāuddīn, "the Pīr of Multān".² This

¹AG, pp. 938-46.

²Pur JS, sākhī 55, p.108.

does not establish a connection with the city for, as we have already noted, the reference to Sheikh Bahāuddīn must be regarded as an anachronism.¹ Miharbān's description of a discourse with the pota of Bahāuddīn must likewise be rejected as an anachronism.²

The tradition related by Bhāī Gurdās³ must also be set aside. The incident which he briefly recounts concerns a symbolic gesture which the pīrs of Multān are said to have made when they heard of the Gurū's approach. A cup filled to the brim with milk was sent out to him, the intention being to indicate that the city already contained all the holy men it could hold. Gurū Nānak laid a jasmin petal on the milk and returned it, thereby proclaiming that there was still room for one more. This is an example of the kind of anecdote which gains common currency in hagiography. An earlier version of this particular legend is related in connection with 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (AD 1077-1166), the founder of the Qādirī order of Sūfīs.⁴ The details differ,⁵ but the story is essentially the same.

¹See supra p.298.

²Mih JS, gost 131, p.434. See infra p.256 . The IO Library Ms B40 (folio 53) also describes a meeting with the pota of Bahāuddīn.

³Var 1:44. See suprap.189 . It is repeated in the GR, sakhī 178, p.508.

⁴J. P. Brown, The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism, ed. H. A. Rose, pp. 100-1.

⁵According to this version the city was Baghdad, the cup was filled with water, and the flower which 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī laid on it was a rose. This legend is given as the origin of the Qādirī custom of wearing an embroidered rose in the cap. J. A. Subhan, Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines, p.181.

There is accordingly nothing in the janam-sākhīs which may safely be added to the assumption that Gurū Nānak probably visited Multān. It is possible that he may have had contact with descendants of Sheikh Bahāuddīn and that to this extent there is an element of truth in Purātan and Miharbān accounts. As they stand, however, all of the accounts which describe Multān visits must be rejected. We are left with no more than our initial assumption that the fame and the proximity of Multān would almost certainly have led Gurū Nānak to visit the city at least once during his lifetime.

Gurū Aṅgad

The sākhī describing the manner in which Gurū Aṅgad was tested and found worthy of the succession has already been set aside,¹ but there can be no doubt that the other basic details recorded by the janam-sākhīs are substantially correct. To say that Gurū Aṅgad succeeded Gurū Nānak is to state the obvious and unchallengeable, for the Ādi Granth includes works by him and Sikh tradition could not possibly be mistaken on such a point.² Nor need we doubt the family background which the janam-sākhīs give, for here too tradition would have been reliable. We may accordingly affirm that Gurū Nānak's successor

¹See supra p. 289.

²Vār Rāmakalī by Rai Balvaṇḍ and Sattā the ḍūm refers to Gurū Nānak's appointment of Gurū Aṅgad in paurīs 1-4 (AG, pp. 966-7). See supra p. 65.

was Lahinā, a Trehan khatrī of Khaḍūr;¹ that he met the Gurū and became a follower after the settlement of Kartārpur; that the Gurū bestowed on him the name of Aṅgad; and that he chose him as his successor in preference to either of his sons.

Gurū Nānak's decision to appoint a formal successor was one of critical importance, for there can be no doubt that it was the regular succession of Gurūs which, above all other factors, ensured the transmission of the first Gurū's teachings and the cohesion of the religious community he had gathered around him. The choosing and formal installation of Aṅgad was the first step in the process which issued in the founding of the Khālsā and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh nation. Other factors, such as the clarity of the teachings, the compiling and promulgation of a canon of scripture, the ethnic constitution of the community, and the incentive to greater cohesion provided by Mughal persecution, certainly played very important parts, but it is inconceivable that these elements could have had the same enduring effect without the original bond provided by Gurū Nānak.

The chronology of Gurū Nānak's travels.

The analysis of individual sākhīs is now complete, but there remains the broader question of the total framework which each janam-

¹Amritsar District.

sākhī compiler has constructed with the sākhīs at his disposal. In this respect none of the janam-sākhīs agree. There is general agreement for the period up to Gurū Nānak's departure from Sultān-pur, but for the years which follow this event the Miharbān, Purātan, and Gyan-ratanāvalī accounts all give differing chronologies, and that of the Bhāī Bālā version is fragmented to a degree which appears to render it meaningless. Many of the incidents which provide the substance of these differing chronologies have already been discarded and most of the remainder have been classified as no more than possible sākhīs, but there still remains the question of whether or not we can accept in a general sense any of the patterns which are given in the different janam-sākhīs.

In this examination it is possible to work from two fixed points. Neither of these points can be regarded as beyond doubt, but both have been accepted in this study as at least probable. The first may be located about the year 1500. An association with Daulat Khān Lodī has been acknowledged as likely and from this it follows that Gurū Nānak probably began his travels in or about that year. The actual date may have been a few years earlier, but is unlikely to have been much later as it must have been in or soon after 1500 that Daulat Khān received his appointment to Lahore. The second point which we are probably entitled to regard as fixed is 1520, the year in which Bābur sacked Saidpur.

The pattern which has been generally accepted is the one set out in the Purātan version. This involves four major udāsīs to the east, south, north, and west respectively, with a brief concluding journey to Gorakh-haṭarī. The Saidpur sākhī is included in the first of these, and between each of the udāsīs Gurū Nānak returns to the Pañjāb.¹

The Miharbān Janam-sākhī, on the other hand, gathers the various sākhīs into only two journeys. The first of these is a round trip to the east and then to the south of India. The second is to the north and west, and includes a visit to Gorakh-haṭarī. The Saidpur sākhī follows Gurū Nānak's return from the west.² The third grouping, that of the Gyān-ratanāvalī, follows the Miharbān pattern as far as the journey to the east and south is concerned, but divides the Gurū's subsequent travels into separate northern and western udāsīs. The Saidpur sākhī is placed at the beginning of the second, or northern, udāsī.³

Of these three, the Purātan pattern is much the most unlikely. The Saidpur sākhī follows shortly after the sākhī which describes Gurū Nānak's return to Talvaṇḍī following his eastern udāsī, and this return is said to have taken place twelve years after the departure

¹See supra pp. 265-6.

²See supra p. 270.

³GR, pp. 265-75.

from Sultānpur.¹ The proximity to the Saidpur incident suggests that this sākhī should, according to the Purātan reckoning, be placed in 1519 or 1520, and that accordingly the first udāsī must have begun in 1507 or 1508. This does not accord with the Daulat Khān date. Moreover, it means that the remaining four udāsīs and the period of consolidation at Kartārpur must all be fitted into the last nineteen or twenty years of the Gurū's life. This seems to be most unlikely.²

The Miharbān Janam-sākhī is also in conflict with the Daulat Khān date as it indicates that the udāsīs began in 1506.³ It is, however, much nearer to reasonable possibility in placing the Saidpur sākhī at the end of the major udāsīs, and in this respect it would appear to offer a more likely chronology than the Gyān-ratanāvalī pattern which records the northern and western journeys after the Saidpur incident.

Comparisons of this nature imply, however, that we are bound to accept one or other of the three recorded patterns. This is certainly not the case. There is a fourth possibility and it is a much more likely one. In all probability the janam-sākhī chronologies represent not known fact, but rather the results of the compilers'

¹Pur JS, p.48.

²See also supra pp. 127-8.

³See supra p. 270.

reasoning. In other words, it seems likely that what the janam-sākhīs offer us are structures which have been devised in order to provide logical sequences for the stock of oral sākhīs at the compilers' disposal. This is the conclusion indicated by the India Office Library manuscript B40. In this version the individual sākhīs are, for the most part, set down in isolation and only rudimentary efforts have been made to order them into something resembling a sequence. The manuscript makes it plain that many of the incidents are set outside the Pañjāb, but it does not use them to construct an integrated itinerary. This manuscript offers a more primitive janam-sākhī than the Miharbān and Purātan janam-sākhīs or the Gyān-ratanāvalī, and the contrast between its lack of order and the developed continuity of the later versions strongly suggests that integrated itineraries should be regarded as a characteristic of the later stages of the janam-sākhī evolutionary process.

Such a conclusion should not, of course, imply that Gurū Nānak never travelled. All sources agree that he did and contemporary tradition could hardly have been mistaken in a general issue of such importance. This we must certainly accept and we may also assume that the period of his travels probably covered the first two decades of the sixteenth century. The probable association with Daulat Khān Lodī provides a beginning for the period, and the likelihood that Gurū Nānak was present at Saidpur in 1520 indicates a probable terminus. Certainly

he must have been back in the Pañjāb by 1526 at the latest. Within this period, however, it is possible to name neither destination nor sequence. The most we can do is accept as inherently probable Bhaī Gurdās's statement that Gurū Nānak travelled round visiting centres of pilgrimage.¹

Gurū Nānak's life now falls into three clearly defined periods. The first three decades comprise his childhood and early manhood in Talvaṇḍī and Sultānpur. This first period evidently culminated in an experience of enlightenment and divine call. The fourth and fifth decades are the period of his travels in and possibly beyond India. The remaining two decades were then spent chiefly in Kartārpur, and we may assume that it was during this period that the real foundations of the Sikh community were laid.

The Life of Gurū Nānak

We may now proceed to relate the life of Gurū Nānak.

Gurū Nānak was born in AD 1469, probably in the month of April. His father was Kālū, a Bedī khatri of Rāi Bhoi kī Talvaṇḍī, and his mother was named Tiparā. Kālū and Tiparā had one other child, a daughter whose name was probably Nānakī and whose husband's name was Jai Rām. Gurū Nānak was married to the daughter of Mūlā, a Choṇā khatri of Baṭ-

¹Vār 1:25. See supra p. 177.

ālā who had formerly resided in the village of Pokho dī Randhāvī. His wife's name was probably Ghumī and two sons, Lakhmī Dās and Sirī Chand, were born to them.

As a young man Gurū Nānak worked in the town of Sultānpur, probably in the employment of Daulat Khān Lodī. This must have been during the last decade of the fifteenth century. While in Sultānpur he experienced a sense of divine call and it was evidently in response to this that he began a period of travelling in and perhaps beyond India, accompanied for at least some of the time by a mirāsī named Mardānā. Neither the pattern nor the extent of his travels can be determined, but it may be assumed that he visited a number of the more important centres of both Hindu and Muslim pilgrimage. The period of travelling probably ended in or shortly before 1520 as it seems likely that Gurū Nānak witnessed Bābur's attack upon the town of Saidpur in that year. It appears, however, that the references he makes to Bābur in his works point rather to the invasions of 1524 and 1525-26.

At some stage a wealthy follower evidently donated land on the right bank of the Rāvī and there the village of Kartārpur was built. This probably took place after the Gurū's travels had ended. For the remainder of his life he lived in Kartārpur, but made brief journeys from there to places within easy reach. These destinations probably included Pāk Paṭṭan and Multān. Contacts with Nāth yogīs were frequent and on one occasion the Gurū evidently engaged a group of them

in debate at the village of Achal Baṭālā.

During his years in Kartārpur Gurū Nānak must have attracted many disciples, one of whom was Lahīṇā, a Trehan khatri of Khaḍūr. Lahīṇā must have impressed the Gurū by his devotion and ability, for prior to his death Gurū Nānak renamed him Angad and appointed him as his successor in preference to either of his sons. The Gurū died in Kartārpur in either 1538 or 1539.

In this brief account we have everything of any importance which can be affirmed concerning the life of Gurū Nānak. It provides us with an outline, but it is a meagre one, leaving lengthy periods covered by no more than a general comment or a single detail. And yet in spite of this paucity of authentic biographical material there is much we can know about Gurū Nānak. In the numerous works by him which are recorded in the Ādi Granth we have the developed theology of a great religious figure. It is to his teachings that our search for the historical Nānak must lead us, for there only do we truly find him.

THE THEOLOGY OF GURŪ NĀNAK

Nānaka dukhīā juga chāre binu nāma Hari ke
mani vase.¹

Nānak, without the indwelling of the Nām of
Hari in the man one undergoes suffering
throughout the four ages.

Vichhūriā kā kiā vīchhūrai, miliā kā kiā melu!²

What terrible separation it is to be separated
(from God) and what blissful union to be united
(with Him)!

Terse expression is common in the writings of Gurū Nānak and we find it illustrated in these two extracts. Both concern the ultimate purpose of all life and all religion, and set it forth as union with God through the indwelling Nām, an inward union which brings eternal bliss. He who recognises this, who accepts the proffered means and so attains such union, transcends the cycle of birth and death and passes instead into a condition of beatitude, infinite, eternal, and ultimately inexpressible.

Such a summary statement, however, can have meaning only

¹Tukhārī Chhant 2(4), p.1110. In this section page references are all from the Ādi Granth unless otherwise indicated.

²Mārū 1, p.989.

in the light of a developed understanding of Gurū Nānak's beliefs. Who, or what, is this God with whom union is sought? Of what nature is He? Is He to be conceived in terms of personality? In what way is His being expressed to man? And what is man? Of what nature is his condition that he should seek to transcend it? What are the proffered means and how does he appropriate them? Having appropriated them how is his regenerate condition to be described, insofar as words are able to describe it? These and many other related questions must be answered if we are to reach an adequate understanding of Gurū Nānak's beliefs, of what we may properly call his theology.

Theology is the correct word to use in this connection, for the whole of Gurū Nānak's thought revolves around his understanding of the nature of God. It was entirely appropriate that Gurū Arjan should place a declaration of the nature of God at the very beginning of the Ādi Granth and that it should be called the Mūl Mantar, the Basic Credal Statement.¹ Of all Sikh scripture none is more important than Gurū Nānak's Japjī, and in this work of surpassing beauty (which significantly follows immediately after the Mūl Mantar in the Ādi Granth²) the theme is God, the One whom men must praise

¹AG, p.1.

²AG, pp. 1-8.

and who yet far exceeds the most exalted conception which the mind of man can form. It is theology which we find in the śabads and śloks¹ of Gurū Nānak, but it is not systematic theology and there was no intention that it should be. Gurū Nānak's writings bear witness to his experience of God and the basic expression of that experience is the hymn of praise which it engenders. Neither Gurū Nānak himself nor Gurū Arjan who compiled the Ādi Granth² sought to set out his beliefs in an integrated pattern, and we should not expect them to have done so. For the purposes of our own understanding, however, such a pattern can do much to clarify the nature of his belief and accordingly the intention of this chapter is to seek such a pattern.

The fact that Gurū Nānak's thought is not set out systematically does not, of course, mean that it is necessarily inconsistent. On the contrary, one of the great merit of his thought is its very consistency. The accusation of inconsistency has been levelled against him,³ but we believe that the system outlined in

¹In Sikh terminology śabad is used for pad and ślok for dohā.

²See Appendix 1, p. 607.

³Cf J. E. Carpenter, Theism in Medieval India, pp. 477-8. J. N. Farquhar, An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, p. 337. Nicol Macnicol, Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period, pp. 146, 153. E. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, p. cv.

the present chapter will constitute a rebuttal of the charge. One can gauge the importance of this aspect of Gurū Nānak's works by comparing them with those of other bhagats. Kabīr's thought, for all its striking qualities, is by no means as consistent doctrinally as that of Gurū Nānak. In Nānak's case the consistency is there even if it is not at once apparent. There is certainly that doctrinal tension which is inevitable in a system upholding both the gracious activity of an absolute God and the necessary participation of man endowed with free will, but the person who seeks to extract the components of Gurū Nānak's thought and to fashion with them a systematic theology does not have to decide between statements which are mutually incompatible. Nor indeed does he have to grapple with the degree of obscurity which is found in so much of Kabīr's thought.

The comparison with Kabīr is an instructive one at this point. Gurū Nānak and Kabīr both offer syntheses and in each case the nature of the synthesis reflects the personality of its author. This is a point of critical importance as far as the subsequent effect of their thought is concerned. Kabīr was above all a mystic and the pattern of his thought is determined by this quality. The result is both profundity and obscurity. Kabīr's works have commanded an immense popularity ever since they were first circulated, but the popularity has been accorded to thoughts

in isolation, not to an integrated pattern of belief. It has been the pithy saying, the striking aphorism, which has brought Kabīr his popularity. Those who claim direct allegiance to him, the Kabīr-panthis, possess a system of belief, but it is one which only remotely resembles the original teaching of the sect's eponymous founder.

Gurū Nānak, on the other hand, produced a coherent pattern and one which, with some additions by later Gurūs, is followed to this day by orthodox Sikhism. In his own way Gurū Nānak was also a mystic and, as with Kabīr, the climax of his thought is to be found in an ineffable union with God, the Formless One. The climax itself was beyond analysis or expression, but not the path to it, and in this respect Gurū Nānak is much clearer than Kabīr. A person of pronounced mystical inclinations would doubtless find in Kabīr's ✓ works something of the depth of meaning which Kabīr himself had experienced, but most men would not. Many could, however, appreciate the pattern which Gurū Nānak sought to expound, for it is expressed in terms which are much more readily understandable. The fact that Gurū Nānak appointed a successor to continue his work is of primary importance as far as the perpetuation of his teachings is concerned, but it is not the only reason to account for the existence of modern Sikhism. The clarity and the coherence of Gurū Nānak's thought have also been factors of fundamental significance.

This relative clarity concerns, however, the actual product, not its antecedents. There can be no doubt that the Sant tradition provided the substance of his thought,¹ but the nature of the subsidiary influences is by no means clear. The principal problem in this respect concerns Gurū Nānak's debt to Sūfism. In the case of tantric yoga there is little uncertainty for we find in his works an explicit and repeated rejection of nāth beliefs.² Traces of nāth concepts and terminology are certainly evident, but they have clearly descended to him through sant channels which have transformed their meaning. In Gurū Nānak's usage such elements are, for the most part, naturalised. They belong to the sants, not to the nāths.

The question of Sūfī influence is, however, much more obscure. It is at once evident that many elements of Gurū Nānak's thought have affinities with Sūfī concepts. There is a revelation in creation, the paradox of God transcendent as well as immanent, a doctrine of grace, an emphasis upon the suffering involved in separation from the Beloved, a concept of nām japnā³ which appears to combine elements of both the dhikr and murāqabat of the Sūfīs, an ascent to union through a number of stages, a purging of self, and an ultimate union which,

¹See supra pp. 43 ff, 54.

²A particularly striking example is the pad Sūhī 8, p.730. See infra p. 569.

³Remembrance of the Nām. (See infra pp.577 ff.)

although it is nowhere explicitly defined, does not appear to be inconsistent with the Sufi notions of fanā and baqā. There is also an emphasis upon the needlessness of asceticism on the one hand, and upon the snare of worldly wealth on the other. This is an impressive list and one which at first sight suggests that Sufism must have exercised a considerable influence in the formation of Gurū Nānak's beliefs.

There are two questions which require consideration at this point. The first concerns the nature of Sufi influence upon the sants who preceded Gurū Nānak, and the consequent mediation of Sufi concepts to him through the Sant tradition. The second relates to the possibility of direct influence upon him. It is the first of these which is particularly complicated, for most of the concepts which in Gurū Nānak's works evoke Sufi associations are to be found in the earlier Sant tradition. The issue is a complicated one, and indeed it must be regarded as ultimately insoluble. In the first place, we are involved here in a complex interchange of influences. Sufism itself had been affected by Indian thought and notions which may be traced to Sufi sources may in some cases have pedigrees which carry them back to an earlier Indian source.¹ Secondly, almost all of the apparent affinities can, with equal cogency, be traced back to

¹S. M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, p.123.

native Indian sources. Immanence, grace, meditation, purging of the self, and mystical union do not necessarily require reference to Sūfī doctrine.

In one case a Sūfī debt may certainly be acknowledged. There can be no doubt that the emphasis upon the suffering involved in separation from the Beloved must be regarded as a debt to the Sūfīs, and the same must also apply to the related figure of the devotee as bride and God as the divine Bridegroom. Beyond this it is impossible to proceed with any certainty. It seems intrinsically probable that the Sūfīs must have at least encouraged latent tendencies, but it is not possible to identify these with assurance.

The question of direct influence upon Gurū Nānak concerns specifically the concept of an ascent to union through stages, a point at which his thought diverges strikingly from that of Kabīr. In Gurū Nānak's Japjī this is expressed in the famous figure of the five khandas, or "realms",¹ a figure which has been regarded as a borrowing from the maqāmāt of the Sūfīs. It is possible that the Sūfī doctrine offered some encouragement in this respect, but it is impossible to regard it as the actual source. The one feature which the two doctrines have in common is the broad notion of progressive ascent towards ultimate union. Gurū Nānak's figure is not

¹Japjī (34-37), AG pp. 7-8. See infra pp. 594-601.

entirely clear at all points, but insofar as the individual khands can be understood none of them bears any resemblance to the Sūfī maqāmāt. A much closer parallel can, as we shall see, be found in a native Indian tradition.¹

This must discount any theory of significant direct influence upon Gurū Nānak from Sūfī sources, and this conclusion is strengthened by the one example of a pad directed specifically to a Sūfī. Gurū Nānak's Sūhī 4² appears to be a comment upon another pad in the same rāg attributed to Shaikh Farīd.³ It does not actually disagree with the Farīd pad, but it does imply a judgment upon its inadequacy. This conclusion concerns, however, only direct influence. Whatever influence we may acknowledge upon the Sant movement as a whole we may also allow as indirect influence in the case of Gurū Nānak, although even here there is evidence of modification. The figure of the bride is a prominent feature of Gurū Nānak's works,⁴

¹See infra p. 594.

²AG, p.729.

³Sheikh Farīd, Sūhī 2, AG p.794. The AG contains four śabads and 117 śloks attributed to Sheikh Farīd. The number of śloks is normally given as 119, but two (nos. 113 and 124, AG p. 1384) are evidently by Gurū Nānak as they appear under his title in Var Sirī Rāgu (AG, pp. 83, 91.)

⁴E.g. Sirī Rāgu Aṣṭ 2, Āsā 10, 26, 27, 35, Āsā Chhant 1, Vadhansu 2, 3, Dhanāsari Chhant 3, Tilāṅg 3, Sūhī Chhant 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. See also infra p. 574, . .

but the tribulations of her path do not receive the same degree of emphasis as we find in Kabīr.

Gurū Nānak's principal inheritance from the religious background of his period was unquestionably that of the Sant tradition, and evidence of other influences is slight. This does not mean, however, that he transmitted a sant pattern unchanged. He received a synthesis and he passed it on, but he did so in a form which was in some measure amplified, and in considerable measure clarified and integrated. This applies in particular to his understanding of the manner of divine communication with man. Gurū Nānak's concepts of the Śabad, the Nām, the Gurū, and the Hukam carry us beyond anything which the works of earlier sants offer in any explicit form.

The śabads and śloks which have been used in the analysis which follows are those which are recorded in the Ādi Granth. There have, naturally, been many other verses attributed to Gurū Nānak,¹

¹The janam-sākhīs contain several apocryphal works attributed to Gurū Nānak, the most important of them being the Prān Saṅgalī. (Pur JS, pp. 89 and 118.) The complete text is given in the photozincograph edition of the Colebrooke JS, pp. 337-50. For other examples of apocryphal works see Pur JS, pp. 11, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30, 34, 40, 41, 54-55, 62, 67, 68, 94, 95, 103, 109, 115 and 116-20. For a list of the apocryphal works included in the Miharban JS see Appendix 3, p. 529, of Kirpāl Singh's edition, and also p. 489 for an instance which he does not list in the Appendix. Another example is to be found in R. C. Shukl's Hindī Sāhitya kā Itihās, p. 79 (11th edition). Neither of the pads which he gives as illustrations of Gurū Nānak's work is by him. The first is apocryphal and the second is Gurū Tegh Bahādur's Sorāṭhi 13.

but none of these have been used as there can be no guarantee of their authenticity. The restriction involves no appreciable loss, as the Ādi Granth offers a very substantial quantity of works by Gurū Nānak.¹ These can all be accepted as authentic. It is clear that Gurū Arjan compiled the Ādi Granth with considerable care and the principal source which he used was a collection which had been recorded at the instance of the third Gurū, Amar Dās, who was only ten years younger than Gurū Nānak.²

Finally, it must be emphasised that this analysis concerns the theology of Gurū Nānak and not the theology of Sikhism. The two are largely but not completely coterminous and at one major point there is divergence. A theology of Gurū Nānak as opposed to Sikh theology must omit the important contributions of Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan, and above all of Gurū Gobind Singh. In the case of the third, fourth and fifth Gurūs the omission concerns amplifications, valuable indeed³ but involving no significant modification of the pattern set out by the first Gurū. With the tenth Gurū, however, comes the institution of the Khālsā and finally

¹Kānh Singh, MK p.327, gives the figure 947 as the total of all Gurū Nānak's śabads, śloks, chhants, paurīs, etc. in the AG. See Appendix 1, p.609.

²See Appendix 1, p. 612.

³Particularly in the case of Gurū Arjan's contributions.

the declaration that the line of personal Gurūs has ended and that henceforth the function of the Gurū is vested in the Scripture (the Ādi Granth) and in the community (the Panth). This is of fundamental importance. For Sikhism the Scripture exists as a channel of communication between God and man, but obviously this could be no part of Gurū Nānak's theology. The result has been a certain confusion in the minds of many non-Sikhs and occasionally the question 'Who was the guru of Gurū Nānak?' is asked with an evident note of perplexity. Sikhism has consistently replied that God Himself was the Gurū of Gurū Nānak. This is a valid answer, but the question must be raised of whether it is a sufficient one. The question must, however, wait.¹ The point here is simply that we are concerned with the theology of Gurū Nānak and not with that of Sikhism.

I. The Nature of God

1 Om Sati Nāmu Karatā Purukhu Nirabhau Niravairu
Akāla Mūrati Ajunī Saibhan Gura prasādi²

At no point is Gurū Nānak's quality of terseness better illustrated than in the Mūl Mantar, the basic theological statement with which the Ādi Granth begins. Professor Jodh Singh paraphrases

¹See infra pp. 503 ff.

²The Mūl Mantar, AG p.1.

it as follows:

This Being is One. He is eternal. He is immanent in all things and the Sustainer of all things. He is the Creator of all things. He is immanent in His creation. He is without fear and without enmity. This Being is not subject to time. He is beyond birth and death. He is Himself responsible for His own manifestation. (He is known) by the Gurū's grace.¹

Almost all accounts of Sikh belief refer to the Mūl Mantar and in Sikh commentaries considerable space is devoted to its exegesis.²

In itself, however, the statement conveys relatively little. To a devout Sikh it imparts a wealth of meaning, but only because he has behind him an understanding of what the individual words mean. In themselves the words are not self-explanatory and in isolation may be interpreted in ways which would not accord with a comprehensive statement of Gurū Nānak's theology. The symbol Om is particularly open to misinterpretation if it be read without reference to Gurū Nānak's other works³ and it is by no means self-evident why Professor Jodh Singh should paraphrase Sati Nāmu as "He is eternal". It is in the light of the total range of Gurū Nānak's thought that the Mūl Mantar is to be interpreted, for it is the expression of his thought throughout his śabads and śloks which gives particular meaning and substance to each of the words. The Mūl Mantar may

¹Jodh Singh, Guramati Nirāṇay, p.1.

²Vīr Singh devotes 37 pages to it. (Santhya, pp. 1-37.)

³The lengthy poem Oaṅkāru in the measure Rāg Rāmakaḷī Dakhaṇī, AG pp. 929-38, provides an elucidation.

well serve both as a starting point and as a final summary, but much remains to be filled in between the two.

1. The Unity of God

At the very beginning of the Mūl Mantar stands the figure 1 and Sikh tradition is unanimous in accepting this as a declaration of the unity of God.¹ The conclusion is entirely reasonable for the emphasis is strongly made in Gurū Nānak's works.

Guru eho horu nāhi koi,
Nā ko hoā nā ko hoi.²

His supreme quality is that there is no other besides Him, neither was there, nor will there be.

Jāpai āpi Prabhū tihu loi,
Jugi jugi Dātā avaru na koi.³

The Lord is manifest in the three worlds.
He is the eternal Giver and there is no other.

{Hora nāhi koi.' 'Avaru na koi.' 'Avaru nahī dūjā.' They are amongst the characteristic expressions of Gurū Nānak which recur

¹"Gurū jī de likhe is '1' ne sānun ih bī dasiā ki anekatā yā nānattav yā sriṣṭī jo kuchh kaho is dā mūl '0' sūn (apahond yā manfiat) nahīn, par hond hai jo '1' hai." - Vīr Singh, Santhya, p.3.

"The figure 'one' appended to 'Onkar' does not merely signify God's unity as against trinity, but also affirms His being a personality and not merely a Shunya or void." - Gopal Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. i, p.1, n.1.

²Āsā 3, p.9, and Āsā 2, p.349.

³Oaṅkārū (25), p.933.

many times.¹ God is for him simply Ek, the One.

Chhia ghara chhia gura chhia upadesa,
Guru guru eko vesa aneka.²

There are six systems of philosophy, six gurus,
and six patterns of instruction, but the Guru of
these gurus is one though His manifestations be many.

Gurū Nānak's concept of unity is no mere implicit mono-
theism of the kind which lies behind the trimūrti doctrine or
which is assumed in so much Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism. It is an
explicit monotheism, repeated again and again. It has indeed
been argued that Gurū Nānak accepted the trimūrti³ and the
justification for this claim is held to be the first two lines
of the thirtieth paurī of Japjī.

Ekā māi jugati viāi tini chele paravāṇu,⁴
Iku sansarī iku bhaṇḍārī iku lāe dībāṇu.

Out of context these two lines would be translated:

In some way or other a Mother conceived and
bore three approved disciples - one the creator
of the world, one the sustainer, and one who
exercises the authority of death.

All Sikh commentators, however, begin their translations or para-
phrases of this passage with some such words as : "It is believed

¹Cf Gaurī 10, p.154; Āsā 21, p. 355; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 1 (8), p.832;
Oaṅkāru (5), (9), (47), pp. 930, 931, 937; Rāmakalī Siddh Goṣṭi
(73), p.946; Maru 13, p.1034.

²Āsā Sohilā 2, p.12, and Āsā 30, p.357.

³P. D. Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry, p. 255.

⁴Japjī, p.7.

that....." and in the light of both the context and of Gurū Nānak's repeated references to the oneness of God there can be no doubt that the addition is warranted. The same paūrī continues with an emphatic assertion of the absolute authority of God:

Jiva tisu bhāvai tivai chalāvai jiva hovai furamānu.¹

But Thou dost order (them) as seems good to Thee
and (they act) in accordance with Thy command.

In the following paūrī he declares that God Himself is both Creator and Sustainer:

Āsaṇu loi, loi bhaṇḍāra,
Jo kichhu paia su eka vāra;
Kari kari vekai Sirajāpahāru,
Nanaka Sache kī sachi kara.²

His abode is in every realm of the universe
and every realm is His storehouse. That which
He created He created once only and having
created it He, the Creator, sustains it. This,
Nānak, is the authentic work of the True One.

It is true that Gurū Nānak does refer to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiv in ways which suggest that he accepted their existence as real, but they appear as the creatures of God, deprived of all functions and subject to māyā and to death.³ God did not merely create Brahmā,

¹Japjī, p.7.

²Ibid (31), p.7.

³Cf Gaurī 9, p. 224; Gaurī 14, p. 227; Gūjarī 2, p. 504;
Bilāvalu Thiti (4), p. 839; Mārū Solahā 2 (14), p. 1022;
Mārū Solahā 11 (14), p. 1032; Mārū Solahā 17 (3), p. 1037;
Bhairau Aṣṭ 1 (4), p. 1153.

but He created the world also and He it is who sustains it.¹

God is Himself Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer and His direct exercise of these functions reduces all demiurges and subordinate deities to meaningless shadows. Elsewhere they seem to lose even this qualified acceptance:

Brahmā Bisanu Mahesa ika mūrati āpe karatā kārī.²

Teja Singh paraphrases this as follows:

He, the One, is Himself Brahmā etc. (Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer) and He Himself performs all.³

As with Kabīr this same emphasis on the unity of God emerges in the names which Gurū Nānak uses. Hari is the most common and there are other Vaiṣṇava names in his works, but there are also Muslim names. God is Hari, Rām, and Gopāl, and He is also Allāh, Khudā, and Sāhib.⁴ His manifestations may be many, but He alone is and there is no other.

Sāhibu merā eko hai,⁵
Eko hai bhāī eko hai.

My Master is the One. He is the One,
brother, and He alone exists.

¹Marū Solahā 15 (14), p. 1036. See infra p. 457.

²Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 9 (12), p. 908.

³Śabadārath, p. 908, n.2. Cf. also Japjī (5), p. 2.

⁴The characteristic Sikh term Vāhigurū is not found in Gurū Nānak's writings. It first appears in the Savayye of the bhaṭṭs. See Appendix 1, p. 608.

⁵Āsā 5, p. 350. cf also: Āsā 7, p. 350; Āsā 27, p. 357; Bilāvalu Thitī (1), p. 838; Sāraṅg Aṣṭ 2 (6), (8), p. 1233.

2. Nirgun and Sagun.

Niragunu āpi saragunu bhī ohī.¹

The words are Gurū Arjan's, but the doctrine which they so concisely express is also Gurū Nānak's. God, the One, is both nirgun and sagun, both absolute and conditioned, both unmanifest and manifest.

For Gurū Nānak, God in His primal aspect is nirgun - absolute, unconditioned, devoid of all attributes.

Trai varatai chauthai ghari vāsā.²

He who spread out the three (gunas) has made His abode in the fourth.

In other words He is beyond the three gunas - nirgun. In this absolute aspect God is unknowable, completely beyond the range of human comprehension. God, however, is not wholly beyond human perception and for Gurū Nānak the explanation lies in His having endowed Himself with attributes which bring Him within the compass of man's understanding. He, the nirgun, of His own volition became sagun in order that man might know Him and knowing Him enter into a unitive relationship with Him.

Avigato niramāilu upaje niraguna te saraguna thīā.³

¹ Gauri Sukhamanī, Mahala 5, Asṭ 18 (8), p.287.

² Marū Solahā 18 (4), p.1038.

³ Siddh Gosti (24), 940.

From His absolute condition He, the Pure One,
became manifest; from nirgun He became sagun.

There is at this point some danger of misunderstanding.

The term sagun is generally used in connection with Vaiṣṇava bhakti and in this customary sense it implies a belief in divine avatārs. This is certainly not the meaning which is to be attached to the word in Gurū Nānak's usage, or in that of any of his successors. In Gurū Nānak's usage the term relates not to anything resembling anthropomorphism, but to his concept of divine immanence. Principal Teja Singh comments as follows on a relevant passage from Gurū Arjan's Bilāvalu 117:¹

In scripture God is said to have two aspects. One is that which He possessed when there was no creation and He existed solely in Himself. His qualities of power or of being unborn cannot thereby be diminished, but we can form no impression of them in our mind. This is His nirgun aspect. Then He created and so revealed himself in His creation. All the qualities or praiseworthy characteristics which can be attributed to Him are of this sagun aspect. Both are aspects of the one God.²

It is in this sagun aspect that man can know God and accordingly it is this aspect which is the object of Gurū Nānak's meditation and of his exposition. The nirgun nature of God, for all its fundamental quality, receives little attention, for beyond the mere affirmation there is nothing man can say of it. In the ultimate condition of

¹AG.p.827.

²Śabadārath, p.827, n.

union man does indeed participate in this absolute quality and so in experience it can be ultimately known, but the way to God, the sādhana, must be concerned with the sagun expressions.

3. Creator

Gurū Nanak has set out his cosmology in the pad Mārū Solahā 15. It begins:

Arabada narabada dhundhūkārā,
Dharāṇi na gaganā hukamu apārā.¹

For countless aeons there was undivided darkness. There was neither earth nor heavens, but only the infinite Hukam.

He then details at length the things which did not exist, his point being that apart from God and His Hukam there was nothing. It is a striking picture with much that evokes the Genesis conception of primeval chaos. Finally:

Jā tisu bhāṇā tā jagatu upāiā,
Bājhu kalā āḍaṇu rahaia;
Brahmā Bisanu Mahesu upāe māiā mohu vadhaidā.²

When it pleased Thee Thou didst create the world, establishing Thy creation without visible supports. Thou didst create Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiv, and Thou didst spread abroad the allurements of māyā.

A number of references to the creative activity of God have already

¹AG, p.1035.

²AG, p.1036. cf also Mārū Solahā 4, pp. 1023-4.

been quoted and there are many more available.¹ The frequency with which they occur is significant in that it brings out a clear and explicit concept of the personality of God. Again the comparison with Kabīr is interesting. An affirmation of the personality of God does emerge from Kabīr's writings, but it emerges rather by hint and implication than by explicit statement. References to God as Creator are comparatively scarce and lack the clarity of Gurū Nānak's declarations. The same also applies to other attributes which imply a notion of personality. In Kabīr's works we grope; with Nānak we find clarity.

Jīa jāti raṅgā ke nāva,
 Sabhanā likhiā vūrī kalāma;
 Ehu lekha likhi jānai koi,
 Lekha likhiā ketā hoi.
 Ketā tānu suālihu rūpu,
 Ketī datī jānai kaṇu kūtū;
 Kita pasāu eko kavāu,
 Tisa te hoe lakha dariau.²

Beings of various kinds, colours, and names -
 He wrote them all with a flowing pen. If anyone
 knew how to record the number what an immense
 account it would be. What power, what beauty of
 form, what gifts! Who can guess them! With a
 single command He unfurled creation and by that
 command there sprang forth thousands of rivers.

¹Cf Mārū Solahā 17, pp. 1037-8; Vār Mājh, paurī 1 & 2, p.138; Vār Mājh, paurī 12, p.143; Gaurī Aṣṭ 4 (3), p.222; Āsā Paṭṭī Likhi (1), p.432; Vār Sūhī, ślok 1 of paurī 10, p.788; Bilavalu Thiti (3), p.839.

²Japjī (16), p.3.

Soī Maulā jini jagu mauliā hariā kiā sansāro;
 Āba khāku jini bandhi rahāi dhannu Sirajāaharo.¹

He is the Lord who caused the world to bloom
 and made it verdant. Hail to the Creator who,
 joining water and earth, established it.

Nirabhau Nirāṅkaru Sachu Nāmu,
 Jā kā kiā sagala jahanu.²

The Fearless One, the Formless One, the True
Nām - the whole world is His creation.

4. Sustainer

God does not merely create. Having brought the world into
 being He watches over it and cares for it.

Jini kiā tini dekhiā jagu dhandharai lāiā.³

He who created the world watches over it
 and appoints all to their various tasks.

And in another passage which affirms both His creative and sustain-
 ing activity:

Sachu Sirandā Sachā jāṇīai sacharā Paravadagāro,
 Jini apī nai āpu sājiā sacharā alakha apāro;
 Dui purā joṛi vichhorianu Gura binu ghoru andhāro,
 Sūraju chandu sirajianu ahinisi chalu vichāro.⁴

¹SirīRāgu 28, p.24.

²Asā Vār, ślok 2 of paupī 5, p.465.

³Sūhī Chhant 4 (1), p.765.

⁴Vaḍahansu Dakhaṇī 3 (1), p.580.

True Creator, True Sustainer, and known as the True One, self-existent, true, ineffable, immeasurable! Uniting both mill-stones¹ He separated them. Without the Gurū there is utter darkness. Having created the sun and moon He directs their paths day and night.

Again the attribution of personality is evident. For Gurū Nānak God is a participant in the life of the universe which He has established, watching, directing and upholding.²

The latter passage also brings out the meaning of the term saibhan which is used in the Mūl Mantar³ and which is usually translated as "self-existent". God created Himself. In human terms this can have no meaning, but human understanding is bounded by strict limitations. The "self-existence" of God is an affirmation of His absolute nature and beyond this human understanding cannot proceed. God in His fullness is for Gurū Nānak far beyond the human intellect and man can no more apprehend that fullness than he can encompass the infinite.

5. Destroyer

God, the One, is Brahmā and Viṣṇu, and so too is He Śiv.

¹i.e. creating heaven and earth.

²Cf also: Āsā 21, p.355; Āsā Vār, pauri 20, pp. 473-4; Sūhī Aṣṭ 2 (8), p.751; Sūhī Chhant 5 (5), p.766.

³See supra p. 449.

The Creator and Sustainer is also declared to be God the Destroyer and Recreator.

Jo usāre so dhāhasītisu binu avaru na koi.

.....
 Bhani bhani gharīai gharī gharī bhajai,
 Dhāhi usārai usare dhāhai;
 Sara bhari sokhai bhī bhari pokhai samaratha
 veparavāhai.¹

He who created also destroys; apart from Him there is no other.....
 Having destroyed He builds and having built He destroys. Casting down He raises up and raising up He casts down. Having filled the sea He causes it to dry up and then fills it again for He, the One beyond care and anxiety, has the power (to do it).

Jo tisu bhāvai samratha so thīai hīlārā ehu sansāro,
 Jali thali mahīali ravi rahīa sācharā Sirajāanāro;
 Sāchā Sirajāanāro alakha apāro tā kā antu na paīa,
 Aīa tina kā sapthalu bhaīa hai ika mani jini dhīaīa;
 Dhāha dhāhi usare āpe hukami savāranāro.
 Jo tisu bhāvai samratha so thīai hīlārā ehu sansāro.²

Thou art absolute and whatever is in Thy will comes to pass. This world is a pretext.³
 The true Creator pervades the waters, the earth and all between earth and sky. He, the true Creator, is ineffable, measureless, eternal. The coming (into the world) of a man is fruitful if

¹Oaṅkāru (31), (41), pp. 934, 935.

²Vaḍahansu Alāhaṇī 1, p.579.

³The meaning of this phrase is not clear. Hīlārā from the Arabic hīlā means 'pretence', 'excuse', 'pretext'. Vīr Singh's interpretation is probably correct: "Eh sansār (tān jīvān de udhār dā ik) behānā hai." "This world is a pretext (i.e. created to be an opportunity) for the liberation of souls." - Sānthya, Vol. 7, pp. 3533-4.

he meditates single-mindedly (upon the Creator).
Breaking down He reconstructs and by His Hukam
he sustains all. Thou art absolute and whatever
is in Thy will comes to pass. This world is a pre-
text.¹

6. Sovereign

Jo tisu bhāvai samratha so thīai.

The first words of the extract from Vaḍahansu Alāhaṇī 1 quoted above gather the creative, sustaining, and destroying activities of God into that basic attribute from which all three flow. God is for Nānak the sovereign Lord, the wielder of absolute authority, the possessor of unqualified power.

Jini ehi likhe tisu siri nāhi,
Jiva furamāe tiva tiva pāhi.²

He who wrote all this (i.e. He who brought the creation into being) bears nothing on His own forehead (i.e. He is unconditioned, subject to no command or fate). Whatever He commands takes place.

Jo tisu bhāvai soī karasī kiratu na meṭiā jāī.³

What pleases Thee, that Thou doest, and none can override it.

'Jo tisu bhāvai!' Here we have another of Gurū Nānak's characteristic

¹Cf also: Āsā Vār, paurī 23, p.475; Vaḍahansu Alāhaṇī 4, p.581 (see infra p.477); Dhanasari Chhant 2, p.688; Nārū Solahā 14 (9), p.1034.

²Japjī (19), p.4.

³Gūjarī Aṣṭ 3 (5), p.504.

expressions. Again and again one encounters these three words or variants of them¹ and repeatedly the same emphasis is made in other ways.

Sīhā bājā charagā kuhīā enā khavāle ghāha,
 Ghāhu khāni tina māsu khavāle ehi chalāe rāha.
 Nadīā vichi tibe dekhāle thālī kare asagāha;
 Kīrā thāpi dei pātisāhī lasakara kare suāha.
 Jete jā jīvahi lai sāhā jīvāle tā ki asāha;
 Nānaka jiu jiu Sachē bhāvai tiu tiu dei girāha.²

He can make tigers and birds of prey eat grass,
 and animals which eat only grass He can make
 eat flesh. He can cause dry places to arise
 in streams and the desert to run with flood
 waters. He can exalt the humblest creature
 to kingship and reduce armies to ashes.
 Whatever creatures live by breathing He can
 sustain without breath. Nanak, the True One
 imparts sustenance as it pleases Him.³

Bhāpai takhati vaḍāiā bhāpai bhīkha udāsi jiu;
 Bhāpai thala siri saru vahai kamalu phulai ākasi jiu;
 Bhāpai bhavajalu laṅghīai bhāpai mañjhi bhariāsi jiu;
 Bhāpai so Sahu raṅgulā sifati ratā guṇatāsi jiu;⁴
 Bhāpai Sahu bhīhavalā hau āvaṇi jāni muīasi jiu.

If it please Thee Thou does exalt one to a throne
 and if it please Thee one renounces the world
 and goes begging. If it please Thee floods flow

¹Cf Japji (27), p.6; Sirī Rāgu 31 and 32, p.25; Gaurī 10, p.154; Sorathī 1, p.595; Mārū 3, p.1010; Tukharī Chhant 5 (2), p.1112. Cf also "Hogu tisai kā bhāṇa" - Gaurī 13, p.155.

²Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 14, p.144.

³This ślok evidently provides another illustration of the process whereby many of the janam-sākhī stories evolved. Kīrnagar dī sākhī, the bizarre legend which relates the victory of an army of insects over a large army of men (see supra p. 70 and p. 206. . .), appears to have developed out of the hyperbole of this ślok, and specifically out of that of the fourth line. The sākhī concludes with a recitation of the ślok (Pur JS, sākhī 25, p.39).

⁴Sūhī Suchajjī, p.762.

over the desert and the lotus blooms in the sky. If it please Thee one crosses the Ocean of Fear and if it please Thee (one's boat) fills (with water and sinks) in mid-ocean. If it please Thee Thou art a Lord of joy and I am rapt in Thy praises, Thou storehouse of excellences. If it please Thee Thou art a fearsome Lord and I go on dying in the cycle of transmigration.

God is accordingly anāth, omnipotent, and as He is omnipotent so too is He omniscient.

Papai Pātisāhu Paramesaru vekhana kau parapañichu kīā;
Dekhai bujhai sabha kichhu jānai antari bahari ravi
rahia.¹

Papā:² The sovereign Lord created this visible world. He sees all, comprehends all, and knows all, permeating (all creation) both within and without.³

7. Eternal

The world, which is the work of God the Creator, is unstable and impermanent, but God Himself is not.

Soī soī sadā sachu Sāhibu sacha sachi nāī;
Hai bhī hosī jāi na jāsi rachana jini rachai.⁴

He the true Lord is eternally true. He is and will be, for unlike His creation he will not pass away.

¹Āsā Pajjī Likhī (24), p.433.

²Āsā Pajjī Likhī from which this extract is taken is an acrostic and the extract quoted is the couplet for the letter papā.

³Cf also: Āsā Vār, paurī 16, p.472; Bilāvalu Thitī, pp. 838 ff.; Bilāvalu kī Vār, ślok 2 of paurī 11, p.854; Mārū Solahā 1, pp. 1020-1.

⁴Japjī (27), p.6.

Mukāmu kari ghari baisanā nita chalanai kī dhokha;
 Mukāmu tā paru jānīai jā rahai nihachalu loka.
 Dunīā kaisi mukame!
 Kari sidaku karani kharachu bādhanu lagi rahu nāme.

 Alāhu alakhu agama kādaru karānahāru karīmu;
 Sabha duni āvanā jāvanī mukāmu eku rahīmu.

 Mukāmu ohī Eku hai Nānakā sachu bugoi.¹

We have made this our resting place and built our dwelling (here in the world), but we are ever envious about its permanence. That which remains and does not pass away is recognised as a resting place. But what kind of resting place is the world? (Do not accept it as such.) Acquire your travelling expenses by deeds of faith; cleave to the Nām.....
 (Guru Nanak then lists the various kinds of people who through religious practices, power, or wealth seek to ensure their own safety. Yogis, mullahs, pandits, siddhs, sheikhs, pirs, chieftains, sultans, khans, and nobles - all will pass on. Salvation lies in finding Him who dwells in all and is revealed through the Sabad.) Allāh, the ineffable One beyond understanding, the all-powerful Creator, the gracious! The whole world comes and goes. He, the merciful, the One, is our resting place.....
 (The heavens and earth, day and night, sun, moon and stars will all pass away.)
 He, the One, is our resting place. This which Nānak declares is the truth.

God is abināsī, eternal. He is anādi, without beginning, akāl, beyond time, the One who is ever firm and wholly constant. This is a logical corollary of the absolute nature of God, but it requires emphasis because of its importance to Gurū Nānak. To men his repeated

¹ Sirī Rāgu Aṣṭ 17 (1-1R), (6), and (8), p.64.

appeal was that they should renounce their love of the world and all worldly attachments. These are māyā¹ and they are to be renounced, for in the experience of every individual they must inevitably betray the trust which is put in them. Nothing of the world can accompany a man after his physical death² and so for every individual the world is a vain thing which must pass away. As opposed to this fickle, destructible world, however, there stands the eternally constant achal God. He is Nirāñjan,³ the One wholly detached (atīt, alīpt, niramal, niralep), wholly apart from the māyā which He Himself created, wholly perfect.

Ādi anīlu anādi anāhati jugu jugu eko vesu.⁴

The Alpha, the Holy One, without beginning and deathless, eternally immutable.

This same concept lies behind the emphasis which Gurū Nānak lays upon God being ajūnī, unborn, non-incarnated.

Gaganu agamu anāthu ajonī.⁵

Pervading all (as the heavens extend over all), infinite, absolute, not incarnated.⁶

¹See infra pp. 549 ff.

²Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (1R), p.832.

³See infra p. 551.

⁴Japjī (28), p.6. Also paurīs 29, 30, and 31, p.7.

⁵Qaṅkārū (20), p.932.

⁶Cf also: Mūl Mantar, p.1 (See supra p.449); Soraṭhi 6, p.597; Soraṭhi 8, p.598; Bilāvalu Thitī (1), p.838 (See infra p.476); Sārang Aṣṭ 2 (7), p.1233.

To be incarnated means to be involved in death, which is the supreme enemy, the characteristic quality of the unstable world and the ultimate antithesis of God's own eternal being. God, however, is beyond death and transmigration.¹ This, by implication, means that there can be no place for a doctrine of avatārs,² but its primary purpose is to emphasise the total detachment of God from all that is unstable, mutable or corruptible. The world caught up in the cycle of birth and death, of endless coming and going, is real, but it is bināsi, a corruptible reality subject to flux and decay and dissolution, whereas God in contrast with it is abināsi, amar, achut, the incorruptible, immovable, eternal Reality.

If an individual's affections are transferred from the world to God the result is a relationship which endures to eternity and the person who is united with God in such a relationship himself participates in His immortality. This is Gurū Nānak's constant appeal: that men should abandon worldly affections and attach themselves to the eternally tranquil and immutable God.³

¹Cf Mārū Solahā 18 (1-4), p.1038.

²Nānaka Nirabhau Nirañkāru hori kete Rāma ravāla.

Nānak, in comparison with the Fearless, Formless One innumerable Rāms are as dust. - Āsā Var, ślok 2 of paurī 4, p.464.

³Cf also: Sūhī Aṣṭ 1 (8), p.750; Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 6 (2), p.905; Mārū Aṣṭ 11 (7), p.1016; Mārū Solahā 19 (2), p.1039.

8. Formless

The absolute nature and the eternal being of God are metaphysical qualities and there now arises the question of whether for Gurū Nānak the human understanding of God can proceed beyond the strictly metaphysical to something more concrete. The answer is a firm negative and a negative which in its firmness rejects not merely idols and avatārs, but also anthropomorphic language. He is arūp, without form, Nirāṅkar the Formless One. For Gurū Nānak and for all subsequent Sikh thought this word Nirāṅkar has been one of the most important names of God. Paurīs 16-19 of Japjī all end with the salutation:

Tu sadā salāmati Nirāṅkara.¹

Thou the eternally unchanging Formless One.

In Sorathī 3 God is addressed in what is for Gurū Nānak a thoroughly typical way:

Nirabhau Nirāṅkaru niravairu pūrana joti samāi.²

Thou the Formless One beyond fear and enmity,
I blend in Thy pure light.

Such significance has been attached to the name Nirāṅkar that its derivative form Nirāṅkarī has since been used in conjunction with

¹Japjī, pp. 3-4.

²Sorathī 3, p.596.

Gurū Nānak's own name to indicate the nature of the salvation which he himself achieved and which he offered to all who would follow him. Nānak Nirāṅkāri he is called - Nānak who is one with the Formless One. Gurū Nānak himself used the word in just this sense:

Ātamu chinhi bhae nirāṅkāri.¹

Perceiving the nature of spiritual reality (lit. the self) he has become nirāṅkāri, (one with the Formless One).

Nirāṅkar is the characteristic epithet which Gurū Nānak uses to communicate this particular concept, but elsewhere the formless quality of God is expressed in other language.

Nā tisu rūpu na rekhia kiai.²

He has neither form nor material sign.

Sahasa tava naina nana naina hai tohi kau
sahasa murati nana eka tohi,
Sahasa pada bimala nana eka pada gandha binu
sahasa tava gandha iva chalata mohi.³

Thou has thousands of eyes and yet Thou has no eye. Thou hast thousands of forms and yet no form, thousands of holy feet and yet no foot, and without a fragrance Thou has thousands of fragrances,⁴ I am dazed by such a wonder.⁵

¹Āsā Aṣṭ 8 (7), p.415. Cf also Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 1(2), p.685.

²Sūhī Aṣṭ 1 (3), p.750.

³Dhanāsari Āratī, pp. 13 and 663. The version given above is that of p. 663. The two versions differ slightly.

⁴Lit. nose, noses.

⁵Cf also: Japji (5), p.2; Sorathi 6, p.597; Bilāvalu Thitī (1), p. 838 (See infra p. 476); Mārū Solahā 19 (7), p.1040.

9. Ineffable.

God is the Formless One, uncreated, unborn, never incarnated. He cannot be present in an idol, He cannot be revealed by an avatār, and He cannot be described in terms appropriate to the human condition. How then can He be apprehended? Is it in fact possible for human understanding to grasp the nature of God, or must man be content with defining Him in negatives, of describing Him in terms of what He is not?

The first answer to this question must be that God is ultimately incomprehensible, ultimately beyond human apprehension. For Gurū Nānak God in His fullness is far beyond the bounds of man's understanding. The intellect of man is strictly limited and any effort it may make to define the wholeness of God is an effort to circumscribe the infinite, to bring within narrow bounds the One who is boundless. God is ineffable and man's proper and inevitable response to any authentic glimpse of the being of God can only be that of awe (vismād), of fear and wonder before Him who is beyond comprehending. He is agam, ago-
char, inscrutable, beyond the reach of the intellect; agāh, unfathom-
able; acharaj, of surpassing wonder; adrist, beyond seeing or per-
ception; akāl, beyond time; alabh, unsearchable; anant, infinite;
apar, boundless; abol, akah, akath, alekh, beyond utterance or de-
scribing; alakh, ineffable.

Agama agocharu apara apārā Pārabrahamu paradhāno!
Ādi jugadī hai bhī hosi avaru jhūṭhā sabhu māno.¹

¹ Āsā Chhant 3 (1), p.437.

Beyond human grasp or understanding, boundless,
infinite, the all-powerful supreme God!
He who existed before time began, who has
existed throughout all ages, and who shall
eternally exist, (He alone is true). Spurn
all else as false.

Alakha apāra agama agochara nā tisu kālu na karamā,
Jāti ajāti ajonī sambhau nā tisu bhāu na bharamā.
Sāche sachiāra viṭahu kurabaṇu!
Nā tisu rūpa varanu nahī rekhiā sāchai sabadi nīsaṇu.¹

Beyond understanding, infinite, unreachable, beyond
perception, free from death and karam, without caste,
never incarnate, self-existent, subject to neither
love (of worldly things) nor doubt. Thou, the ulti-
mate Truth, to Thee I sacrifice myself. Thou hast
neither form, colour, nor material sign, but Thou dost
reveal Thyself in the true Sabad.

Sacha khaṇḍi vasai Nirāṅkaru,
Kari kari vekhai nadari nihāla;
Tithai khaṇḍa maṇḍala varabhaṇḍa,
Je ko kathai ta anta na anta;
Tithai loa loa ākara,
Jiva jiva hukamu tivai tiva kāra;
Vekhai vigasai kari vīchāru,
Nānaka kathanā karaṇā sārū!²

In Sach Khaṇḍ, the Realm of Truth, dwells Nirāṅkar,
the Formless One, who, having created, joyously
watches over His creation. In it are gathered up
all realms, all regions, all domains. Were one to seek
to count them of their number there would be no end.
Here there are worlds upon worlds, creation upon creation,
and here all proceeds in complete accord with the divine
regulation. Over all God watches and meditates in bliss.
Nanak, to describe it is as hard as steel!

¹Sorathi 6, p.597. This is a particularly important pad. See also
infra pp. 473, 475.

²Japji (37), p.8.

And as God and His dwelling place are beyond all telling so too is that expression of His will which is called the Hukam:

Terā hukamu na jāpī ketarā likhi na jāpai koi;
Je sau saira meliāhi tilu na puḡāvahi roi;
Kīmati kinai na pāiā sabhi suḡi suḡi ākhahi soi.¹

No one has comprehended Thy Hukam and none can describe it. Even if a hundred poets were to gather, their singing could not even approach a description of it. No one has grasped its worth; all but repeat what they have heard.²

10. Immanent

All this, however, concerns God in His fullness. God is infinite and so ultimately beyond apprehension, but this does not necessarily mean that He is wholly unknowable, that He is totally beyond the range of human perception. For Gurū Nānak, as for Nāndev, Kabīr, Raidās, and other sants, there is certainly a revelation of God, partial no doubt but commensurate with the understanding and experience of man and accordingly sufficient for his salvation. The extract from Sorāḡhi 6 quoted above³ continues as follows:

¹Sirī Rāgu Aḡḡ 1 (2), p.53. For Hukam see infra pp. 511 ff.

²Cf also: Dhanāsarī Chhant 2 (1), p.688; Sūhī Chhant 2 (4), p.764; Sūhī Chhant 3 (3), p.765; Bilāvalu 2, p.795 (See infra p.477); Rāmakalī Aḡḡ 8 (6), p.907; Oaḡkaru (15), (17), pp. 931, 932; Marū Solahā 2 (6), p.1021.

³See supra p. 471.

Nā tisu mātā pitā suta bandhapa nā tisu kāmū na nārī,
Akula nirañjana apara paramparu sagalī joti tumārī.¹

Thou hast neither mother, father, son, relation,
wife, nor sensual desire. Thou art without lineage,
free from maya, boundless. Thy light (shines in)
all.

And the passage from Dhanāsari Āratī continues:

Sabha mahi joti joti hai soi,
Tisa kai chāṇaṇi sabha mahi chāṇaṇu hoi;
Guru sākhi joti paragaṭu hoi,
Jo tisu bhāvai su āratī hoi.²

Within all there is light and it is Thy light
which is in all. Through the Guru's leading
the light is revealed. True worship is what pleases
Thee.

The figure is that of all-pervading light and its meaning
is the all-pervading immanence of God.

Mere Sāhibā tere choja vidāṇā!
Jali thali mahīali bharipuri līṇā āpe saraba samāṇā.
Jaha jaha dekha taha joti tumārī terā rūpu kinehā;
Ikatu rūpi phirahi parachhanā koi na kisahī jehā.³

Wondrous, my Master, are Thy ways!
Thou does pervade the waters, the land,
and all that is between the heavens and
the earth, indwelling in all. Wherever
I look there I see Thy light. Of what nature
is Thy form? In a single form Thou dost
move concealed (in all creation) and yet
(in spite of Thy presence) no one person is
the same as another.

¹Sorathi 6, p.597.

²Dhanāsari Āratī, pp. 13 and 663. See supra p. 469.

³Sorathi 4, p.596.

'Jaha dekha ' They are familiar words, both in the works of Gurū Nānak and in those of the sants who preceded him.¹ Wherever one looks there He is to be seen, for He manifests Himself in His own creation.

Prabhu neṛai Hari dūri na jāṇahu Eko srisaṭi sabāi,
Ekaṅkārū avaru nahī dūjā Nānaka Eku samāi.²

Do not regard the Lord as far off for He is near,
He, the One, pervading creation, He is the only
One; there is no other. He, the One, pervades all.

Kudarati kari kai vasiā soi.
.....
Sidaku kari sijda manu kari makhasūdu,
Jihi dhiri dekha tiha dhiri maujūdu.³

Having created nature He dwells in it.....
Make (inner) faith (rather than outer) bowing
the desire of your man and then wherever you
look you will see Him present.

God the omnipotent and omniscient is also God the omnipresent.

Tū dariāu dānā bīnā mai machhulī kaise antu lahā?
Jaha jaha dekha taha taha tū hai tujha te nikasī
phuṭi marā.⁴

¹Cf Sirī Rāgu 18, p.21; Gaurī Aṣṭ 8 (4), p.224; Āsā 28, p.357; Āsā Aṣṭ 19 (3), p.421; Dhanāsari 3, p.661; Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 2 (1), p.686; Sūhī Aṣṭ 5 (2), p.752; Rāmakalī 2, p.877; Mārū Solahā 18 (1), p.1038; Basant Aṣṭ 5 (2), p.1189; Prabhātī Aṣṭ 3 (6), p.1343. Cf also: Namdev, Gaund 2, p.873; Kabīr, Basant 1, p.1193.

²Oaṅkārū (5), p.930.

³Sirī Rāgu kī Vār, ślok 1 of paurī 4, p.84.

⁴Sirī Rāgu 31, p.25.

Thou art the ocean, the all-knower, the all-seer.
How can I, a fish, perceive Thy limit? Wherever
I look there Thou art. If I leave Thee I burst
and die.

This is accepted as a general truth and one of fundamental importance, but Gurū Nānak, in common with other sants, goes further. The Nirāṅkar who is immanent in all creation is specifically immanent in one particular part of creation. The extract from Sorāṭhi 6 continues:

Ghaṭa ghaṭa antari Brahamu lukāiā ghaṭi ghaṭi
joti sabāi;
Bajara kapāṭa mukate guramati nirabhai tāri lāi.¹

God (Brahmā) is concealed within every heart,
His light pervades every one. Through the Gurū's
instructions the gates of adamant (of the man) open
and (the man perceives) the abode of the fearless
Lord.

And in Sorāṭhi 8:

Ghaṭi ghaṭi ravi rahia Banavāri,
Jali thali mahiali gupto varatai Gura sabadi
dekhi nihari jiu.
Marata pajāla akāsu dikhaio Guri Satiguri kirapā
dhari jiu.
So Brahamu ajoni hai bhi honi ghaṭa bhitari dekhu
murari jiu.²

The Lord pervades every heart. He dwells concealed
in the waters, the land, all that is between the
heavens and the earth, but through the Sabad of the
Gurū he is revealed. By His grace the Gurū, the

¹Sorāṭhi 6, p.597.

²Sorāṭhi 8, pp. 597-8.

Satiguru, revealed Him to me in this world where
all dies, in the nether world, and in the heavens.
The non-incarnated Brahmā is and eternally will be.
Witness the Lord within yourself!

God who dwells in all creation has His particular abode within the
human heart.¹

Ekama Ekaṅkāru nirālā!
Amaru ajonī jāti na jālā!
Agama agocharu rūpu na rekhīā;
Khojata khojata ghaṭi ghaṭi dekhīā.²

The one Om̐kāṛ, wholly apart, immortal, unborn,
without caste, wholly free, ineffable, without
form or visible sign; but searching I perceived
Him in every heart.

All of this is no mere aesthetic mystery, no mere source of
numinous awe which, however impressive it may be, leaves man essentially
where he was. Here we are at the crucial point, the point at which there
can exist communication between God and man and through which there can
develop that relationship which means release and salvation. Failure
to grasp this is regarded as fatal.

Iki bhagavā vesu kari bharamade viṇu Satigura
kinai na pāiā.
Desa disatara bhavi thake tudhu andari āpu
lukaia.³

¹In this particular context the word used is generally ghaṭ, but man
is also used in this sense. (See infra p.536 .) Ghaṭ in Gurū Nanak's
works may mean 'body', but in most contexts the best translation is 'heart'.

²Bilāvalu Thitī (1), p.838. Cf also: Bilāvalu Chhant Dakhaṇī 1 (4),
p.843; Siddh Gostī (53), p.944; Mārū Solahā 11 (2), p.1031; Bhairau 6,
p. 1127; Basant Aṣṭ 4 (8), p.1189; Prabhātī 10, p.1330; Surplus śloks
not used in Vars (19), p.1412.

³Vār Malār, paurī 25, p.1290.

Wearing ochre garments they wander around, but without the Satiguru none have found Thee. Roaming in all countries and in all directions they have grown weary (but their efforts are futile for) Thou art hidden within.

For Gurū Nanak the saving activity of God is expressed at this point. Here, in the divine Hukam, is the inscription of His will for all who are able to read it; here it is that the Śabad and the Nām acquire the substance which renders them meaningful to the human understanding; and it is here that the Gurū's voice is to be heard.¹

Jini jagu siraji samāiā so Sāhibu kudarati jāṇovā.
 Sacharā dūri na bhālīai ghaṭi ghaṭi sabadu pachhāṇovā.
 Sachu sabadu pachhāṇahu dūri na jāṇahu jini eha
 rachanā rāchī;
 Nāmu dhīae tā sukhū pāe binu nāvai piṛa kāchī.²

Know Him who creates and destroys the world by His creation. Do not look far off for the True One, but recognise Him in the guise of the Śabad in every heart. He who established this creation, recognise Him as the true Śabad and do not imagine Him to be far distant. He who meditates on the Nām finds peace. Without the Nām the game (of life) is worthless.

Agama agochara alakha apārā chintā karahu hamārī!
 Jali thali mahīali bharipuri līṇā ghaṭi ghaṭi
 joti tumārī.³

¹This summary statement will be developed below under Hukam, Śabad, Nām, and Gurū, pp. 488 ff.

²Vaḍahansu Alāhaṇī 4, p.581.

³Bilāvalu 2, p.795.

(Thou who art) inscrutable, beyond apprehending,
ineffable, infinite, have mercy upon me!
Thou who dost pervade the universe, Thy light
shines in every heart.¹

11. Active in salvation

In the pattern of salvation which is to be found throughout the works of Gurū Nānak effort on the part of the individual is essential, but it is not the only factor and nor would it appear to be the primary one.

Nānaka sachā Pātisāhu āpe lae milāi.²

Nānak, the True King Himself unites (the believer) with Himself.

It is God, says Gurū Nānak, who is responsible for that union which is the climax of the salvation process. Man must participate and unless he does so there can be no release, no union. His participation is, however, dependent upon the prior activity of God and without this divine initiative the question of human participation does not arise as its need is not recognised.

Sabhi sata sabhi tapa sabhi chaṅgiāiā,
Sidhā purakhā kīā vaḍiāiā,
Tudhu vinu sidhī kinai na pāiā,³
Karami milai nahī thāki rahaia.

¹Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 5, p.223; Āsā 7, p.350; Āsā Aṣṭ 3 (4), p.412.

²Sirī Rāgu 10, p.18.

³Āsā 2, p.9, and Āsā 1, p.349. For context see infra p. 482.

All truth, all (the merits of) austerities, all goodness, all the impressive works of siddhs, (all are from Thee). Without Thee none has attained to siddhi, but when Thy grace is received no obstacle remains.

Nānaka Nadarī karamī dāti!¹

Nānak, all we receive is by the grace of the Beneficent One!

At no point in the whole range of Gurū Nānak's theology does belief in the personality of God emerge with greater clarity. There are, it is true, critics who maintain that for Gurū Nānak God was impersonal, that his beliefs were in basic accord with advaita doctrine.² The theory is chiefly confined to works in Hindī, but occasionally it is to be found in a Sikh work.³ It is also true that such a case can be made by reference to Gurū Nānak's bānī, but it involves a selection which concentrates on passages dealing with the unity and the immanence of God, and which neglects those dealing with His creative activity and, above all, those which relate to divine grace. Were the latter rare they might plausibly be demythologised, but they recur frequently.

¹Japjī (24), p.5.

²Cf Paraśu-Rām Chaturvedī, Uttarī Bhārat kī Sant Paramparā, pp. 345-8.

³Cf Surindar Singh Kohli, A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, p.336: "In its monotheism the Sikh Faith resembles Islam and that is the reason why some historians and writers have asserted that Sikhism is the product of Islam on Hinduism. But a deeper study exhibits the differences in the conception of Godhead. God of Islam is personal, but the Saint-poets sing of an impersonal God."

Dr. Kohli does not actually say that Gurū Nānak sings of an impersonal God, but this would appear to be the implication of the above passage.
(cont.)

It seems clear that the weight of emphasis which Gurū Nānak lays upon what is normally referred to as the grace of God must render such efforts invalid. A case could be made on the basis of accepted texts to show that Kabīr was a Nāth yogī and yet there can be no doubt that he was not one. It is only by a process of partial selection that it can be done, and likewise this is the only way in which Gurū Nānak's thought can be presented as implicitly monistic. In some cases the conclusion may be the result of an inability to reconcile immanence with activity. The dilemma persists, however, only if the being of God is to be contained within the limitations of human existence and that for Gurū Nānak was certainly not the case.

This, of course, is not to suggest that the proponents of such a view have been consciously and deliberately biassed in their analysis of Gurū Nānak's works. It merely expresses a conviction that the total range of his work leaves his belief in the personality of God in the ultimate sense, an inescapable conclusion. In it we find the divine activity emphasised again and again.¹ It is not

(cont.) Principal Tejā Singh represents the more orthodox Sikh point of view:

"With them (the Sikh Gurūs) God is not an abstract idea or a moral force, but a personal Being capable of being loved and honoured, and yet he is conceived of as a Being whose presence is diffused all over His creation." Tejā Singh, Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions p.2.

¹See below the section on Nadar, pp. 520 ff. Cf also: Vār Mājh, paurī 16, p.145; Gaurī Ast 17, p.228; Āsā 3, p.349.

activity at a secondary level, but purposeful activity upon which the attainment of release depends. Nor is it an inflexible activity which could be interpreted as a mythologised version of natural laws. Natural laws are indeed acknowledged and, as we shall see, are regarded as a significant part of God's communication with the world.¹ They are not, however, the ultimate basis, for behind them lies a will which is expressed in terms of decision, of giving and withholding. Efforts to demythologise at least something of this can be made, but only at the cost of ignoring manifest meaning, only by insisting that Gurū Nānak means something different from, or perhaps more subtle than, what he actually says.

12. The greatness of God

The purpose of systematic theology is to construct a consistent framework, to develop a coherently integrated pattern out of what is dispersed throughout the record of an individual or corporate religious experience. In order to do this it is necessary to extract, analyse, and rearrange in a pattern which serves this particular purpose. By itself, however, such a pattern must be inadequate for it will inevitably lose much of the spirit which prompted the original record. At the beginning of this section on the nature of God it was

¹See infra pp. 513-15.

noted that the characteristic expression of Gurū Nānak's religious experience is the hymn of praise and it is appropriate that the section should close with extracts which convey something of this spirit. It is an impulse which Gurū Nānak shares with all bhagats. Nirāṅkar, the Formless One, is the supreme Lord of the universe, absolute, eternal, ineffable, and yet purposing that man should know Him and find ultimate peace in union with Him. Before such majesty, infinite and yet condescending in mercy to stoop to man, the inevitable response for Gurū Nānak must be that of adoring praise.

Suṇi vaḍā ākhai sabhu loi,
 Kevaḍu vaḍā ḍiṭhā hoj;
 Kīmati pāi na kahīā jāi,
 Kahāpai vāle tere rahe samāi.
 Vaḍe mere Sāhibā gahira gambhīrā guṇī gahīrā!
 Koi na jānai terā ketā kevaḍu chīrā.
 Sabhi suratī mili suratī kamāi;
 Sabha kīmati mili kīmati pāi;
 Giānī dhīānī gura gurahāi;
 Kahāpu na jāi terī tilu vaḍīāi.
 Sabhi sata sabhi tapa sabhi chaṅgiāiā,
 Sidhā purakhā kiā vaḍīāiā;
 Tudhu viṇu sidhī kinai na pāiā,
 Karmi milai nāhī ṭhāki rahaīā.
 Akhāpa vālā kiā vechārā,
 Sifatī bhare tere bhaṇḍārā;
 Jisu tū dehi tisai kiā chārā,
 Nānaka sachu Savārāpahārā!¹

Having heard of Thy greatness everyone speaks of it, but only by seeing Thee can one know the immensity of Thy greatness. No one can know or express Thy worth. Those who tell of Thee are gathered up into Thee.

¹Āsā 2, p.9, and Āsā 1, pp. 348-9.

Great art Thou, my Lord, ineffable and of excellences beyond comprehending. None can encompass the measure of Thy greatness.

The exegetes gathered together and expounded the scriptures; all extollers of Thy worth together determined that worth; men of understanding, men of contemplation, gurus and gurus' gurus (all proclaimed Thy greatness and yet) not a fragment of Thy greatness could they express. All truth, all (the merits of) austerities, all goodness, all the impressive works of siddhs, (all are from Thee). Without Thee none has attained to siddhi, but when Thy grace is received no obstacle remains. Thine is a storehouse filled with excellences beyond telling. He to whom Thou givest (support) what need has he of any other help? Nānak declares: Thou art the True One and all is in Thy hands.

Sāche nāma kī tilu vaḍiāī,
 Ākhi thake kīmati nahi pāi;
 Je sabhi mili kai ākhana pāhi,
 Vaḍa na hovai ghaṭi na jāi.
 Nā ohu marai na hovai sogu,
 Deda rahai na chūkai bhogu;
 Guṇu eho horu nahi koi,
 Nā ko hōa nā ko hoi.
 Jevaḍu api tevaḍa teri dāti,
 Jini dinu kari kai kīti rāti;
 Khasamu visarahi te kamajāti,
 Nānaka nāvai bājhu sanāti.¹

In describing only a tiny portion of the glory of the Nām (men) have wearied themselves and yet failed to discover its worth. If all were to gather together and strive to describe it the glory would be neither heightened nor dimmed. He does not die and there is no occasion

¹ Āsā 3, p.9, and Āsā 2, p.349. Both of these hymns (i.e. Āsā 2 and 3, p.9) are included in the Raharas, the Sikh order for evening prayer.

to mourn Him. He gives continually and His gifts do not cease. His particular quality is that He alone is, that there neither was nor will be another. His bounty is infinite as He is infinite, He who caused night to follow day. Low is he who forgets the Lord; wretched is he who is without the Nām.

II The Divine Self-Expression

Dūri na jānā antari mānā Hari kā mahalu pachhānā.¹

I know that Thou art not afar. I believe that Thou art within. I have recognised God's palace (within my heart).

In the last section attention was drawn to Gurū Nānak's belief concerning the immanence of God in the human heart, and it was noted that this belief was for him of primary significance, for it is at this point that there may exist communication between God and man.² That the indwelling God should speak to man through his mind or what we call his heart is not in itself a remarkable doctrine and in a general sense it was universally accepted by the sants. It is when we proceed from this point to enquire precisely how God communicates with man that we encounter the specific contribution of Gurū Nānak, a contribution which offers the most significant example of his positive originality. This is not to imply that his work is

¹Tukhārī Chhant Bārah-māhā (6), p.1108.

²See supra p.476.

wholly original, for this can never be the case and much of what we find in Gurū Nānak, both in the total range of his thought and at this specific point, undoubtedly represents an inheritance from his contemporary religious environment. Nor does it necessarily mean that any single strand is without parallel elsewhere, for originality can lie as much in the pattern that is woven as in the threads which are used. There may have been earlier sants who had arrived at similar conclusions concerning the medium of divine communication. In many there is silence at this point and it is possible that the notions which we find developed in the works of Gurū Nānak may have existed in an inchoate form in the minds of sants who preceded him. It is true that even in Gurū Nānak's works there is not that manifest clarity which conveys an immediate understanding, but developed concepts of the divine self-expression are there nevertheless and exegesis will reveal them.

The obvious comparison is once again Kabīr and, as we have already noted, Kabīr and Gurū Nānak clearly share a common tradition. An outline of their respective sādhanaś emphasises the broad similarity of their thought and offers one reason to explain why the two figures have been so closely connected. The correspondence amounts, however, to no more than similarity. It is certainly not identity. Of Kabīr Dr. Vaudeville writes:

La seule 'révélation' valable, pour lui, est celle de la 'Parole' (qabda) silencieuse que le Parfait Gourou (Satguru) prononce au 'fond de l'âme' (antari) - et ce Gourou est Dieu.¹

For Gurū Nānak, as for Kabīr, the Satgurū's Sabad is the true revelation, and for him also the Gurū is God. Beyond this basic agreement, however, there is appreciable divergence. To speak of a "'Parole' silencieuse" would not actually be incorrect in Gurū Nānak's case, but it would certainly be misleading. Moreover, we find in Gurū Nānak's doctrine of the Hukam and his emphasis upon divine grace elements which carry him beyond Kabīr. The two are certainly within the same tradition, but their respective interpretations of it are by no means identical.

Our analysis at this point must concern six key words: śabad, nām, gurū, hukam, sach, and nadar.² Of these the first five bear a basic identity. In them we have five different words, but we do not have five radically different concepts. Instead we have five different aspects of a single all-embracing concept. This single concept is perhaps best expressed by the last of them, sach or truth, but in itself the word obviously has little substance and can only acquire it in the context of Gurū Nānak's usage. Frequently these words are used in ways which render them synonymous. All five are

¹ Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr, p.25.

² Nadar, or nazar, here represents a group of words which have the same or a closely related meaning: kirpā, prasād, karam (the Persian word), bakhsīś, bhāṇā, daīā (dayā), mihar, taras.

expressions of God; all are used to expound the nature, content and method of the divine communication to men, of the divine truth which when appropriated brings salvation; all share a fundamental identity.

This does not appear to have received the emphasis it deserves and the result has been an inability to give a satisfactory, coherent answer to the question of how in the thought of Gurū Nānak God communicates with man. The question has been allowed to remain a mystery. It is not sufficient to state that the Gurū is God, that the Hukam is His will, that the Śabad is the divine Word, and that the Nām represents the sum total of all God's qualities. Not all of these definitions can be accepted without some qualification, and even if they could the basic question would still remain unanswered. In what way is this divine Word so presented to the human understanding that it can be recognised, accepted, and followed? This is the fundamental question and in order to answer it we must turn to the analysis of the six words.

Of the six the one which must receive the closest attention is hukam. This it requires partly because it has generally received much less attention than the other four; partly because it is in Gurū Nānak's use of this word that his development beyond the thought of Kābir and other bhagats is most obvious; but above all because together with nadar it carries us furthest in our effort to set out Gurū

Nānak's answer to the basic question. Nadar likewise demands careful scrutiny. It has not been overlooked in the way that hukam is so often passed over, but neither has it normally received the degree of emphasis which it warrants. The translation of this and several of the other words given in footnote 2, page 486, is invariably the word "grace", a translation which would appear to be the best available but which can be misleading in certain circumstances. The problem will be dealt with in the appropriate section.¹

1. Śabad

Hau kiā ākhā ika jībha terā antu na kinahī pāiā.
Sachā sabadu vīchārī se tujhahī māhi samāiā.

.....
Gura kā sabadu ratanu hai karī chānanu āpi dikhāiā.
Āpanā āpu pachhāiā guaramati sachi samāiā.²

None has encompassed Thy bounds so how can I describe Thee with a single tongue? He who meditates on Thy true Śabad is joined in union with Thee
The Gurū's Śabad is like a (sparkling) gem which reveals Thee by its light. One understands one's own self and through the Gurū's instruction merges in the Truth.

Śabad is one of the terms which descended to Gurū Nānak from Nāth sources. In the context of Nāth theory the word is characteristically used in conjunction with anahad, or anāhat, and refers to the

¹See infra pp. 525-6.

²Vār Malār, paurī 25, p.1290.

mystical "sound" which is "heard" at the climax of the Haṭha-yoga technique. The anahad śabad is, according to such theories, a "soundless sound",¹ a mystical vibration audible only to the adept who has succeeded in awakening the kundālīnī and caused it to ascend the sūṣumnā.²

Kabīr's usage distinguishes Śabad and anahad śabad. The Śabad is the Gurū's "Word", the revelation of God which is given in the depths of the human soul. The anahad śabad, however, he uses in a sense very close to that of the Nāths, although the experience which it expresses is, for him, in no way dependent upon the practice of Haṭha-yoga.³

¹"Unstruck music" - Rabindranath Tagore, One Hundred Poems of Kabir, p.20.

²According to the physiological theories of Haṭha-yoga there are three principal channels (nāḍī) which ascend through the human body. These are the idā and piṅgala, which terminate in the left and right nostrils respectively, and the sūṣumnā (or sukhmanā) which is held to run through the spinal column. Along the sūṣumnā are located six, or eight, chakras (discs, wheels, "lotuses") and at its base, behind the genitals, is the kundālīnī, a latent power symbolised by the figure of a sleeping serpent. By means of the Haṭha-yoga discipline the kundālīnī is awakened, and ascending the sūṣumnā it pierces each of the chakras in turn, thereby releasing progressively effectual stores of psychic energy. At the climax of the ascent it pierces the sahasradala, the "lotus of a thousand petals" said to be located at the top of the cranium. The dasam dūār ("tenth door") then opens and the jīv passes into the ineffable condition of sahaj, the state of ultimate union with Brahman.

³Ch. Vaudeville, Kabīr Granthāvalī (Dohā), Introduction pp. xxii-xxiii.

In the case of Gurū Nānak we find that, as with all such words which have Nāth antecedents, the term has travelled even further from its source. The expression anahad śabad has moved away to the periphery. It has become a useful figure of speech, a convenient means of conveying some impression of an experience which is strictly inexpressible.

Antara kī gati jāñīai Gura milīai sañka utāri;
 Muia jitu ghari jāīai titu jivadiā maru mari;
 Anahada sabadi suhavane pāīai Gura vichāri.
 Anahada bāñī pāīai taha haumai hoi bināsu;
 Sataguru seve āpapa hau sada kurabāñai tasu;
 Khañi daragaha painhāīai mukhi Hari nama nivāsu.¹

When one meets the Gurū then, casting away doubt, one understands one's inner being. While yet alive prepare for the place where you must go when you die. (Prepare for it) by subduing the evil which is within you, and then die. Through meditation on the Guru one hears the enchanting unstruck music. When it is heard haumai² is destroyed. I humble myself before him who serves the Gurū. He who repeats the Nām of God (lit. in whose mouth dwells the Nām of God) receives a robe of honour in the (divine) court.

The link with Nāth usage is very slender. Here there is no kundālīnī, no idā, piṅgalā and susumpnā, no chakras, no prāṇāyām.

The expression, like other Nāth terms which are to be found in Gurū Nānak's works, has been naturalised. Its antecedents no longer

¹Sirī Rāgu 18, p.21.

²For haumai see infra pp. 541 ff.

cling to it as they do in the case of Kabīr's usage.¹ Moreover, such hints of the old Nāth association usually occur in pads which are obviously addressed to yogīs and which have a manifest dialectic or apologetic purpose. In such cases Gurū Nānak, like any effective apologist, has deliberately expressed himself in terms which would be related to a yogī's understanding.

Gurū Nānak's emphasis is wholly upon the concept of the Śabad as the vehicle of revelation. Inevitably, the Śabad is described by him more in terms of what it does than in terms of what it actually is. This is entirely natural as it is the function which concerns him and it is in experience that it is to be known rather than in any purely intellectual sense. The function of the Śabad is that it provides the means whereby man can know both God and the path which leads to Him, the means whereby the individual may secure release from his bonds and so attain union with God. Again and again the Śabad is declared to be the essential means of salvation.² It is for Gurū Nānak the revelation of God and so the only proper object of man's contemplation. By contemplation of the Śabad and by the total conforming of one's life to its dictates the man is brought

¹Cf Jodh Singh, Guramati Nirāṇay, pp. 211 ff.

²Cf Sirī Rāgu 19, p.21; Gaurī 17, p.228; Sūhī Aṣṭ 2(2), p.751; Siddh Goṣṭi (55), p.944 and (61), p.945.

under control, self-centredness is cast out, the individual grows ever nearer to God until ultimately perfected in His likeness he passes into a condition of union which transcends death and the cycle of transmigration.

Nā tisu rūpa varanu nahī rekhīā sāchai sabadi
nīsāṇu.¹

He has neither form, colour, nor material sign,
but He is revealed through the true Śabad.

Guramukhi mukato bandhu na pāi,²
Sabadu bīchāri chhuṭai Harināi.

By the Guru's leading he obtains salvation and
is no longer bound (to the cycle of transmigration).
Meditating on the Śabad, (repeating) the Nām of
God, he is released.

Nā hau nā mai na hau hovā Nānaka sabadu vīchāri.³

Nānak, if one meditates on the Śabad his self-centredness,
the 'I' within him, is no more.

Binu sabadai sukhu nā thīai pira binu ḍukhu na jāi.⁴

Without the Śabad there is no joy;
without the Master suffering does not go.

¹Sorathī 6, p.597.

²Gaurī 6, p.152.

³Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 4, p.139.

⁴Sirī Rāgu 13, p.18.

Guramukhi sabadu amritu hai s̄aru;
Nānaka guramukhi pāvai p̄aru.¹

For the gurmukh (the follower of the Gurū)
the Śabad is the amrit, the essence. Nānak,
the gurmukh crosses over (the Ocean of
Existence).

Binu sabadai bharamāiai dubidhā dōbe p̄uru.
Mana re sabadi tarahu chitu lāi!
Jini guramukhi namu na bujhia mari janamai āvai jāi.²

Without the Śabad one is condemned to wander;
worldly affections cause many to sink (in the
Ocean of Existence). O man, apply your
understanding to the Śabad and cross over.
He who has not followed the Gurū and so has
not understood the Nām (such a person) continues
to transmigrate.

Nānaka Sāhibu sabadi siñāpai s̄achā Sirajāpahārā.³

Nānak, the Lord, the true Creator, is known
by means of the Śabad.

Often the word Śabad stands by itself and often it is linked
with the Gurū. The latter may be regarded as the characteristic
form, for the use of Śabad by itself normally assumes its connection
with the Gurū. The form may be guru kā śabad or it may be guru-
śabad.

¹Oaṅkāru (22), p.932.

²Sirī Rāgu 15, p.19.

³Dhanāsari Chhant 2 (3), p.688.

Gura kai sabadi bharama bhau bhāgai.¹

(At the coming of the) Gurū's Śabad doubt
and fear flee away.

So sevaki Rāma piārī,
Jo gura sabadi bīchārī.²

The servant beloved of God is he who meditates
on the Gurū-Śabad.

The former is quite rightly translated "the Gurū's Śabad", but the latter, "Guru-Śabad", carries us nearer the true meaning for it brings out the basic identity of the two terms. The development of this point must, however, await the section devoted to the Gurū and in the meantime we must continue to use the expression "the Gurū's Śabad".

For Gurū Nānak the Śabad is accordingly the Gurūpades, that expression of God's truth which is imparted to man by the Gurū. All that concerns God, all that relates to the path which leads to Him is the Śabad. It is this comprehensive quality which distinguishes his concept of the Śabad from that of Kabīr. Man's proper response to the divine revelation is, for Gurū Nānak, an inward one, but the revelation itself is by no means confined to a mystical inward experience. There is in his works a much stronger emphasis upon the

¹Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 1 (8), p.686.

²Rāmakalī 10, p.979.

significance of external circumstances and phenomena as aids to the necessary inward perception. The Śabad embraces all that is Truth, all that expresses the nature of God and the means of attaining Him, and this may be perceived in the divine laws governing the universe as well as in the ineffable mystical experience.

The difference between the thought of Gurū Nānak and that of Kabīr emerges not so much in their understanding of the ultimate experience of union, not so much in their conceptions of the condition of sahaj,¹ as in their differing notions of how that condition is to be attained. For neither is the path to God regarded as accessible to all and both affirm that humanity suffers from a congenital blindness which is overcome in only a minority of cases. In Gurū Nānak's works, however, one can distinguish with much greater clarity the means whereby this spiritual sight is obtained and the path to God followed. There is in his thought relative clarity at a point where in Kabīr's thought we are still obliged to grapple with mystery.

In Kabīr's case, moreover, the experience of enlightenment comes with a suddenness which we do not find in Gurū Nānak's descriptions.

Que Kabīr ait été ou non guidé dans sa quête spirituelle par un Guru humain, il ne fait pas de doute qu'il obtint, à un moment de sa vie, une révélation soudaine.²

¹See infra pp. 603-4.

²Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Proles de Kabīr, p.13.

Evidently there had come to him, at some particular point in time, a compelling and shattering illumination. The figure which he uses to describe it is that of the arrow which is discharged by the Satgurū and which pierces the man.¹ The arrow represents the Śabad and the figure clearly illustrates the abruptness with which it is apprehended according to Kabīr. Gurū Nānak, by contrast, implies an ascent over a period of time as the normal pattern of an individual's salvation experience, of his apprehension of the Truth and the conforming of his life to it. This is clearly brought out in his doctrine of the five khands ("realms" or stages in spiritual progress).² The sākhī which recounts his immersion in the Veīn River does not imply any denial of this.³ The sākhī obviously owes much to a reverent imagination, but there is no need to doubt that Gurū Nānak as a young man did experience a definite sense of call. There is nothing, however, to suggest abruptness. On the contrary the traditions all emphasise the piety of his youth and the call would accordingly come as the climax of a spiritual development.

¹Cf AG, ślok 183, p.1374 (= KG sākhī 39:1); KG, sākhī 1:7.

²Japjī, paurīs 34-37, pp. 7-8. See supra p.471 and infra pp.594 ff.

³See supra pp. 196, 349.

This difference is not confined to their respective interpretations of the Śabad, but these interpretations are an illustration of it. Given the initial act of God's favour, the initiative which first arouses within a man the longing for union, the Śabad is for Gurū Nānak within the range of ordinary human understanding. It is by no means wholly within it for the Śabad partakes of the infinity of God, but sufficiently within it to be readily accessible to all who desire it. God Himself is in His fullness a mystery far exceeding the comprehension of man, but in His Śabad He expresses Himself in terms which may be understood and followed. Here we are anticipating much that properly belongs to the section dealing with the Hukam, but with terms which share a common basis a certain amount of anticipation is unavoidable.¹

Before concluding this section it is worth noting the connection between the Śabad and the occasional use of śabad in the headings of the Ādi Granth² and in subsequent Sikh usage as a synonym for pad. The link is obvious and provides an interesting parallel to the use of sakhī as a synonym for dohā.

¹Cf also: Āsā Chhant 5 (4), p.439; Sorathī 6 (1R), p.579, (See supra p.471); Dhanāsari Chhant 2 (3), p.688; Mārū Solahā 20 (14), p.1041.

²e.g. Rāg Mārū, p.989.

2. Nām

Sansāru rogī nāmu dāru mailu lāgai sachā binā.¹

For a diseased world the remedy is the Nām.
Without Truth the infection remains.

This second category can be discussed with greater brevity than the first, not because it is any less important, but because for all practical purposes it is synonymous with Śabad. The functions which are affirmed in the case of the Śabad may without exception be affirmed in the case of the Nām also. It too is the revelation of God's being, the only proper object of contemplation, the standard to which the individual's life must conform, the essential means of purification and salvation.

Rāmanāma binu mukati na hoī. Nānaku kahai vichārā.²

Nānak has reflected and this is his pronouncement:
that without the Nām of God there is no
salvation.

Kañchana kāiā niramala hansu;
Jisu mahi nāmu Nirāñjana ansu,
Dukha roga sabhi gaia gavai,
Nānaka chhūṭasi sachai nai.³

¹Dhanāsari Chhant 1 (1), p.687.

²Āsā Chhant 2 (4), p.437.

³Malār 7, p.1256.

Within the body of gold is the pure swan (soul).
All pain and disease are dispelled from within
him in whom dwells the Nām, the essence of God
(Nirāñjan). Nānak, release is through the true
Nām.

Jagana homa puna tapa pūjā deha dukhī nita dūkha
sahai.
Rāmanāma binu mukati na pāvasi mukati nāmi
guramukhi lahai.
Rāmanāma binu birathe jagi janamā.
Bikhu khāvai bikhu bolībolai binu nāvai nihaphalu
mari bhramanā.¹

Sacrifices, burnt offerings, charity given to acquire
merit, austerities, and pūjā (are ineffective)
and one's body continues to endure continual
suffering. Without the Nām of God there is no
salvation. He who, by the Gurū's aid, (meditates
on) the Nām (finds) salvation. Without the Nām
of God birth into this world is fruitless. Without
the Nām one eats poison, speaks evil, dies
without merit, and so transmigrates.

In all of these Nām could be replaced by Śabad without al-
tering the sense at all. In other cases the close conjunction of
the two terms renders their identity even more obvious.

Khāta pīanta mūe nahī jāniā.
Khina mahi mūe jā sabadu pachhāniā.
Asathiru chītu marani manu māniā;
Gura kirapā te nāmu pachhāniā.²

Eating and drinking we die without knowing
(the truth). Recognising the Śabad we die
(to self) in an instant. The man has ceased
to wander and it rejoices in this death. By
the Gurū's grace we have recognised the Nām.

¹Bhairau 8, p.1127.

²Oaṅkaru (19), p.932.

Obviously Śabad and Nāma are completely synonymous in this context. The same applies to the following extract from Bhairau 2:

Bhavajalu binu sabadai kiu tarīai?
Nāma binā jagu rogi biāpiā dubidhā ḍubi ḍubi marīai.¹

Without the Śabad how can one cross the Ocean of Fear? Without the Nām the disease of duality has spread throughout the world. (Because of it) men have sunk (in the Ocean) and so perished.

In some cases, however, there is an implied distinction:

Sāchu nāmu Gura sabadi vīchāri,
Guramukhi sāche sāchai darabāri.²

He who meditates on the true Nām by means of the Guru's Śabad is accepted as a true gurmukh in the true court (of God).

Sabade nāmu rakhai uridhāri.³

Through the Śabad one enshrines the Nām in one's heart.

In such cases the Śabad appears as the medium of communication and the Nām as the object of communication. Both remain, however, expressions of God's Truth and the distinction is a very fine one, normally determined by the context. Almost invariably Truth as mediated by the Guru is referred to as the Śabad, whereas Truth

¹ Bhairau 2, p. 1125.

² Āsā 21, p. 355.

³ Prabhātī Aṣṭ 1 (7), p. 1342.

as received and meditated on by the believer tends to be expressed in terms of the Nām. Gurū kā Śabad and Nām japnā are both characteristic expressions. There is, however, no basic difference involved and occasionally one of the two is used where the other would be expected.

Satigura sevi amrita sabadu bhākhai.¹

Following the Satgurū one utters the Śabad which imparts immortality.

Not only is it the Nām which is normally used in the context of the believer's utterances, but also it is Nām which is usually found in association with amrit. The substitution is, however, entirely permissible, even if not common. "Wherever the meaning of Nām is to be found in the Guru Granth Sahib there too is the meaning of Śabad"²

To all this we must add a couplet from Japjī which carries our understanding a stage further.

Jetā kītā tetā nāu;
Viṇu nāvai nāhī ko thāu.³

¹Asā 13, p.352.

²Srī Gurū Granth Koś, pp. 210-1.

³Japjī (19), p.4.

Whatever He has made (the whole creation) is an expression of His Nām. There is no part¹ of creation which is not such an expression.

The creation is an expression of the Creator and so a manifestation of His Truth. We have here a preliminary answer to the question of how the individual is to perceive this Truth which is called Śabad or Nām. Look around you and within you for in all that He has created you will see Him. Understand the nature of what you see and you will understand the nature of God and of the way to Him.

Once again we are verging on what can with greater clarity be treated under Hukam. In concluding this section we may note the radical difference between the Nām of God and the names of God. Hari, Rām, Parameśvar, Jagadīs, Prabhu, Gopāl, Allāh, Khudā, Sāhib - these are all but names and none are essential. Some do indeed bear a special significance, as in the case of Nirāṅkar and Nirāñjan, but even these do not constitute the Nām although they express aspects of it. The Nām is the total expression of all that God is, and this is Truth. Sati Nām - His Name is Truth. Meditate on this and you shall be saved.²

¹Tejā Singh paraphrases the couplet as follows: "Jo kujh us baṇaiā hai (bhāv sarī rachana) us dā nām hī hai." - Śabadārath, p.4, n.14.

²Cf also: Vār Mājh, paurī 6, p.140; Āsā Aṣṭ 2 (1), p.412; Sūhī Chhant 3 (2), p.765; Prabhātī 1, p.1327.

3. The Gurū

Though it is God who imparts wisdom and causes man to do good works, the mediation of the Teacher is still essential. Nānak might lay it down that "he on whom God looketh with favour obtaineth Him". But by what means? The answer was immediate: "He becometh free from hopes and fears, and destroyeth his pride by means of the Word." And the Word was not the immanent light; it was communicated truth. "God saveth man through the true Gurū's instruction - the true Gurū is the giver and procurer of emancipation."¹

Such a statement is adequate as applied to a follower of Gurū Nānak, but not as a definition of Gurū Nānak's own doctrine of the Gurū. It is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough for it leaves unanswered the old question of who was the gurū of Gurū Nānak. How was the truth imparted to Gurū Nānak himself and to his nine successors? The Śabad is indeed communicated Truth and for Gurū Nānak's followers the Gurūs' teachings which are contained in the Ādi Granth (gurbānī) are its vehicle, but what was the source of those teachings? By whom were they originally communicated?

The significance of the gurū within the bhakti tradition is well known and need not detain us here.

A striking characteristic of modern Bhāgavatism is the extravagant respect shown to the spiritual teacher or guru. The first line of the

¹J. E. Carpenter, Theism in Medieval India, p.479.

Bhakta-māla gives as the essentials of religion bhakti, bhakta, Bhagavanta, guru (faith, a faithful devotee, the Adorable, and the guru); and this aptly illustrates the importance attributed to the last-named.¹

Dr. Grierson points out that a respect for one's spiritual teacher is very old, and then continues:

But in modern Hinduism this proper attitude is greatly exaggerated..... His voice is declared to be the voice of God and the fullest devotion in word, act, and deed must be rendered to him.²

In the case of the Sant tradition this inheritance from southern bhakti was reinforced by that tradition's links with the Nāth movement. In the Buddhist tantric tradition the master occupied a position of exalted authority as the mediator of esoteric knowledge and from this source the same emphasis descended to the Gorakh-nāthīs.³

It is within the Sant tradition, however, that we encounter a major modification of the traditional doctrine. As we have already seen there appears to be little doubt that Kabīr had no human gurū, but that for him the Gurū or Satguru represented the inner voice, the mystical movement of God in the depths of the individual

¹G.A. Grierson, Art. "Bhakti-Mārga" in ERE, Vol. II, p.546.

²Ibid. Cf also Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry, pp. 114-122.

³M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, pp. 206-7. P. D. Barthwal, op.cit., p.197.

being, the light of God shed abroad in the inmost recesses of the human soul. The Gurū remains the vital link, the essential mediator of divine Truth, but no longer a human link.

In Gurū Nanak's case we must first note the characteristic emphasis upon the absolute necessity of the Gurū.

Guru paṛī beṛī Gurū Guru tulahā Harināu;
Guru saru sāgaru bohitho Guru tīrathu dariāu.
Je tisu bhāvai ūjalī satasari nāvaṇu jāu.¹

The Gurū is the ladder,² the dinghy, the raft
by means of which one reaches God;
The Gurū is the lake, the ocean, the boat, the
tīrath, the river.
If it please Thee I am cleansed by bathing in
the Lake of Truth (the Gurū's teaching).

Binu Gura bhagati na bhāu hoi;
Binu Gura santa na saṅgu dei;
Binu Gura andhule dhandhu roi;
Manu Guramukhī niramalu malu sabadi khoi.³

Without the Gurū there can be no bhakti, no love;
Without the Gurū there is no admission to the
company of sants;
Without the Gurū one blindly engaged in futile
endeavours;
But with the Gurū one's man is purified for its
filth is purged by the Śabad.

Satiguru hoi daiālu ta saradhā pūrīai;
Satiguru hoi daiālu na kabahūn jhurīai;

¹Sirī Rāgu 9, p.17.

²Cf also Vār Malār, 'slok 2 of paṛī 1, p.1279.

³Basant 6, p.1170.

Satiguru hoi daialu ta dukhu na jāṇiai;
 Satiguru hoi daialu ta Hari raṅgu māṇiai;
 Satiguru hoi daialu ta jama kā ḍaru kehā;
 Satiguru hoi daialu ta sada hī sukhu deha;
 Satiguru hoi daialu ta nava hidhi pāṇiai;
 Satiguru hoi daialu ta Sachi samāṇiai.¹

When the Satguru is merciful faith is perfected;
 When the Satguru is merciful there is no grief;
 When the Satguru is merciful no sorrow is known;
 When the Satguru is merciful the love of God is
 enjoyed;
 When the Satguru is merciful there is no fear of
 death;
 When the Satguru is merciful there is eternal peace;
 When the Satguru is merciful the nine treasures
 are obtained;
 When the Satguru is merciful one blends in union
 with the True One.

Nānaka Gura binu nāhi pati pati viṇu pāri na pāi.²

Nānak, without the Guru there is no honour (in
 the court of God) and without such approval one
 cannot be saved.

Guramukhi bhagati sahaja gharu pāṇiai;
 Binu Gura bheṭe mari āṇai jāṇiai.
 So Guru karau ji sāchu driṇṇavai;
 Akathu kathavai sabadi milāvai.³

It is through the Guru that bhakti is inspired
 and sahaj attained. If one does not meet the
Guru one dies and transmigrates. I shall take Him
 as my Guru who establishes me in the truth, ex-
 presses the unutterable, and mediates the Sabad.

¹Vār Mājḥ, paurī 25, p.149.

²Vār Mājḥ, ślok 1 of paurī 2, p.138.

³Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 2 (1R & 2), p.686.

Niḍariā ḍaru jāñiai bājhu Gurū gubāru.¹

He knows fear who fears not (God).
Without the Gurū is darkness.

Such passages recur constantly,² but there is nothing remarkable in them apart from the quality of Gurū Nānak's expression. Others, however, carry us much further.

Dūja paharu bhaiā jāgu acheti rāma;
Vakharu rākhu muie khājai kheti rāma;
Rakhahu kheti Hari Gura hetī jāgata choru na lāgai.³

In the second watch awake, O heedless brother.
Hold fast to your goods, O mortal. Your field
is being consumed, brother. Protect your field
and (hold fast) in love to Hari the Gurū for if
you remain awake no thief shall come.

Ūrama dhūrama joti ujālā;
Tīni bhavapa mahi Gura Gopālā.⁴

His light illuminates the waters and the earth,
and in the three worlds (He shines), the Gurū Gopāl.

Ūpari gaganu gagana pari Gorakhu tā kā agamu
Guru puni vāsī.⁵

Above is the sky (the dasam duār) and above it is
Gorakh, and there too dwells his ineffable Gurū.⁶

¹Siri Ragu Aṣṭ.3 (3), p.54.

²Cf Āsā Aṣṭ 6, p.414; Vār Āsā, paupī 6, p.466; Sūhī Aṣṭ 2 (2), p.751; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 1 (3), p.831.

³Tukhārī Chhant 2 (2), p.1110.

⁴Oaṅkaru (8), p.930. Cf also Āsā Chhant 2 (3), p.437. (See infra p.592)

⁵Mārū 11, p.992.

⁶This line involves a problem of interpretation, but the problem concerns the word Gorakhu, not Gurū. The most likely interpretation is
(cont.)

Mana re haumai chhoḍi gumānu;
Hariguru saravaru sevi tū pavahi daragaha mānu.¹

Renounce self-centredness and pride, O man.
Serve Hari the Gurū,² the Lake (of Immortality),
for so you shall obtain honour in His court.

Guru Devā Gura alakha abheva tribhavana sojhī
Gura kī sevā.³

The Gurū is God, ineffable, unsearchable. He
who follows the Gurū comprehends the nature of
the universe.

Gurū Arjan makes the point explicitly.

Sataguru Nirāñjanu soi;
Mānukha kā kari rūpu na jānu.⁴

The Satgurū is Nirāñjan. Do not believe that
He is in the form of a man.

In the words of Professor Jodh Singh:

All of the human gurūs who roam around
nowadays have taken instruction from some person
or other. Gurū Nānak's Gurū, however, was not a
person. In the sakhī dealing with the Vein River
incident it is clearly stated that Gurū Nānak
received the cup of the Nām from the true court (of
God). He himself has declared:

(cont.) that Gurū Nānak had Nāth yogīs in mind and that he was
seeking to convince them that the Gurū (identified in their case
with Gorakhnāth) is to be found within.

¹Sirī Rāgu 19, p.21.

²Vir Singh: "Hari (rūp) Gurū." Santhya, Vol. 1, p.300.

³Bhairau 2, p.1125.

⁴Rāmakalī 39, p.895; Cf also Gurū Arjan's Gaup 9, p.864:

Guru merī pūjā Guru Gobindu;
Guru mera Parabrahamu Guru Bhagavantu;
Guru merā Deu alakha abheu;
Saraba pūja charana Gura seu.

'Nirāñjan is the essence of all and His light shines in all places. All is God and nothing is separate from Him. He who is the infinite, supreme God is the Gurū whom Nānak has met.'

- Sorāṭhi 11, p.599.¹

The Tenth Gurū has also declared:

'Know that the eternal and incarnate One is my Gurū.'

- Chaupāī.²

This is the first stage in our effort to define Gurū Nānak's doctrine of the Gurū. We must, however, examine the nature of this identification of Gurū and God for it requires some clarification. Many passages clearly imply a distinction between God and the Gurū and the question of their interpretation must now be considered.

Tribhavanu khoji dhanḍholiā guremukhi/khoji nihāli;
Sataguri meli milāiā Nānaka so Prabhu nāli.³

He whom we searched for throughout the universe we saw by means of the Gurū. It is the Satgurū who causes us to be united with the Lord.

Piru naziki na būjhai bapūṛi Satiguri dīā dikhāi.⁴

The Master is near at hand and yet, O my wretched soul, you do not perceive Him. It is the Satgurū who reveals Him.

¹Sorāṭhi 11:

Tatu Nirāñjanu joti sabāi sonha bhedu na koī jīu;
Aparampara Pārabrahamu Paramesaru Nānaka
Gura miliā soī jīu.

²Jodh Singh, Guramati Nirāṇay, p.114.

³Sirī Rāgu 17, p.20.

⁴Malār Aṣṭ 3 (8), p.1274.

Here there is an evident contrast between the agent and the object of revelation.¹ The conclusion which such extracts suggest is that our initial identification of the Gurū with God needs some qualification. A strict definition requires us to identify the Gurū not with God Himself, but with the voice of God, with the means whereby God imparts truth to man.

This brings us to what is essentially Kabīr's doctrine, but Gurū Nānak takes us one step further. In the case of Kabīr this step may be deduced; with Gurū Nānak it is categorically affirmed. The Gurū is in fact the Śabad. In the Siddh Goṣṭi (43) the Siddhsput the following question to Gurū Nānak:

Terā kavaṇu gurū jis kā tū chelā?²

Who is your gurū, he of whom you are a disciple?

Gurū Nānak replies:

Sabadu Gurū surati dhuni chelā;
Akatha kathā le rahau nirālā;
Nānaka jugi jugi Gurā Gopālā.
Eku sabadu jitu kathā vīchārī;³
Guramukhi haumai agani nivārī.

The Śabad is the Gurū and the surati (which is focussed on it) continually is the disciple. By dwelling on the Ineffable One I remain detached - on Him, the eternal Gurū-Gopāl. It is only through the Śabad (which is the Gurū) that I dwell on Him, and so through the Gurū the fire of haumai is put out.

¹ Cf also Sorathī 8, pp. 597-8. (See supra p. 475); Vār Malār, paurī 25, p. 1290. (See supra p. 476).

² Siddh Goṣṭi (43), p. 942.

³ Siddh Goṣṭi (44), p. 943.

The Gurū accordingly is God; the Gurū is the voice of God; and the Gurū is the Śabad, the Truth of God.¹ Gurū Nānak uses the term in all three senses. One might perhaps raise logical objections to what may, at first sight, appear to be confused usage, but only if one forgets the basic identity which these three senses share in Gurū Nānak's thought. The passage quoted above from the Siddh Gostī brings out this identity not just with the pronouncement that the Śabad is the Gurū, but also with the reference to Gura-Gopālā. God Himself is Truth. In order to accomodate this fundamental belief to the limitations of both language and the human understanding distinctions, if not absolutely essential, are at least very convenient.

4. Hukam

Śabad, Nām, and Gurū - all three are to be defined as the Truth of God made manifest for the salvation of men, and all three share a fundamental identity. And yet the basic question remains unanswered. How is this Truth to be apprehended by man? The fourth key word brings us another stage nearer the answer.

The fundamental importance of the Hukam in the thought of Gurū Nānak is emphasised by its exposition at the very beginning of Japjī. The first paurī puts the basic question:

Kiva sachiārā hoīai kiva kūrai tuṭai pāli?²

How is Truth to be attained? How is the veil
of falsehood to be torn aside?

¹And in Bilāvalu 3, p.795. God is identified with the Śabad:
Ape sabadu ape nisanu.

Thou art the Śabad and Thou art its expression.

²Japjī (1), p.1.

And the concept of Hukam provides Gurū Nānak's answer: Truth is to be found through submission to the Hukam.

Hukamī rajāī chalaṇā Nānaka likhiā nāli.¹

Thus it is written: Submit to the Hukam, walk in its way.

In the following paurī he proceeds to explain the nature of the Hukam.

Hukamī hovani ākāra hukamu na kahia jāī;
Hukamī hovani jāi hukamī milai vaḍiai.
Hukamī utamu nīchu hukamī likhi dukha sukha pāiahi;
Ikanā hukamī bakhasisa iki hukamī sadā bhavāiahi.
Hukamai andari sabhu ko bāhari hukama na koi;
Nānaka hukamai je bujhai ta haumai kahai na koi.²

The Hukam is beyond describing, (but this much we can understand that) all forms were created by the Hukam, that life was created through the Hukam, and that greatness is imparted in accordance with the Hukam. Distinctions between what is exalted and what is lowly are the result of the Hukam and in accordance with it suffering comes to some and joy to others. Through the Hukam one receives blessing and another is condemned to everlasting transmigration. All are within the Hukam; none are beyond its authority. Nānak, if anyone understands the Hukam his self-centredness is purged.³

The conclusions which emerge from this are, first, that just as God Himself is in His fullness beyond human comprehending, so too the Hukam is, in its total range, beyond human understanding. Secondly,

¹Japji (1), p.1. The point of likhiā nāli is not entirely clear, but the phrase probably means that some prevenient knowledge of this universal principle is inscribed on the human understanding. Cf Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.1, n.1.

²Ibid. (2), p.1.

³"This haun (self-centredness) is the veil of falsehood which prevents us from attaining to the Truth. When haun is destroyed Truth is attained." Vīr Singh, Santhyā, Vol. 1, p.48. For haun or haumai see infra pp. 541 ff.

however, it can be understood to be a sufficient degree and this much at least man can comprehend that it is the source of those differences and distinctions in man's condition which are beyond human control. It is the giver of differing forms, of greatness, of differences between high and low, misery and happiness, salvation and transmigration.¹ Thirdly, all are subject to the Hukam. And fourthly, understanding of this divine principle leads to destruction of self. Paupī 3 again sets it forth as the principle which regulates the universe in accordance with the intention of God.

Hukamī hukamu chalāe rahu;
Nānaka vīgasai veparavāhu.²

God's (Hukamī) Hukam directs the path
- (God) the ever-joyous and carefree.

Hukam has usually been translated as "Will".³ This translation is not incorrect, but by itself 'Will' does not convey the precise meaning which Hukam assumes in Gurū Nānak's usage and is liable to be regarded as an exact equivalent of the Islamic concept.

¹Or more specifically the laws which determine who shall attain salvation and who shall continue to transmigrate.

²Japji (3), p.2.

³Gopal Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.1, translates the line "Hukami rajai chalāe Nānaka likhia nali" as follows:

"His Will (forsooth),
Inborn in us, ingrained,
Thou follow.
(Thus is Truth attained.)"

He adds the footnote: "Both words in the text - 'Hukum' and 'Raza' - are Arabic and occur in the Quran and mean respectively God's Will and Submission to the Will." P.1, n.8.

Cf also Tejā Singh, The Japji (English translation), p.17.

The Hukam is for Gurū Nānak the divinely instituted and maintained principle governing the existence and movement of the universe.

It is represented as the agent of creation:

Hukamī sagala kare ākāra.¹

By Thy Hukam Thou didst create all forms.

It determines the regular cycle of human life:

Pahilai paharai raini kai vanajāriā mitrā
hukami paiā garabhāsi.²

My friend, (you who) trade (in the things of the world), in the first watch of the night (the first stage of the human life) you are placed in the womb in accordance with the Hukam.

All are under it:

Ākhaṇu vekhaṇu bolaṇu chalaṇu jīvaṇu maraṇā dhātu;³
Hukamu sāji hukamai vichi rakhai Nānaka Sachā āpi.

Speaking, seeing, moving, living and dying - all are transitory. Thou, the True (Lord) having established the Hukam placed all under it (literally: in it).

And it gathers into a single principle the sum total of all God's activity.

Nā jīu marai na ḡubai tarai;
Jini kichhu kiā so kichhu karai.
Hukame āvai hukame jāi;

¹Vār Mājh, ślok 2 of paupī 27, p.150.

²Sirī Rāgu Pahare 1, p.74.

³Vār Mājh, ślok 2 of paupī 15, p.145.

Āgai pāchhai hukami samāi.¹

(Of itself, i.e. apart from the Hukam) the soul does not die and it neither sinks nor crosses over. He who has been active (in creation) is still active. In accordance with the Hukam we are born and we die. Ahead and behind the Hukam pervades all.

This principle is most immediately perceptible in the laws governing the structure and functioning of the physical universe, but it is by no means limited to this sphere. It is also expressed in moral terms in the law of karam.

Jaisā kare su taisā pāvai;
Āpi bīji āpe hī khāvai.²

One receives in accordance with what one does.
What you sow, that you must eat.

Jaisā bījai so lupe jo khaṭe sou khāi.³

One reaps what one sows and one eats what one earns.

This conviction is as much an aspect of the Hukam principle as the regular movement of the physical universe. Indeed it is a vital aspect.

Tū supī kirata karamā purabi kamāiā;
Siri siri sukha sahama dehi su tū bhalā.
Hari rachana terī kiā gati merī Hari binu gharī
na jivā.
Pria bājhu duhelī koi na belī guramukhi amritu
pīvā.

¹Gaurī 2, p.151.

²Dhanāsari 6, p.662.

³Suhi 7, p.730.

Rachanā rāchi rahe Nirāṅkāri Prabha manī karama
sukaramā.
Nānaka panthu nihāle sādhanā tū suṇi Ātamarāmā.¹

Hear me, O Lord. Each receives joy or sorrow in
accordance with what his past deeds have earned
him and what Thou does give is fair and just.
Thine is the creation, but what is my condition!
Without Thee I cannot live for a moment. Without
my Beloved I suffer torment and there is none to
give me aid. Grant that by the Guru's aid I may drink
the amrit (of the Nām). We remain entangled in the
world which God has created, but the supreme deed is
to enshrine the Lord in the man. Nānak, the bride
watches the way (for Thy coming). Hear my cry, O God.

The law of karam is here explicitly affirmed.² The conclusion which
must be drawn from it is that each individual should perform those
deeds which will, in accordance with the law, bring the supreme
reward. And the supreme deed is to enshrine the Lord in the man.

"Prabha manī karama sukaramā."

Chaṅgiāiā buriāiā vāchai Dharamu haḍuri;
Karamī āpo āpaṇī ke nerai ke ḍuri.
Jinī nāmu dhiaia gae masakati ghali;
Nānaka te mukha ujale ketī chhuṭī nali.³

(In God's) presence Dharamrāj scrutinises
our record of good and evil, and in accordance

¹Tukhāri Chhant Bārah-māhā (1), p.1107.

²Cf also: Vār Āsā, paurī 10, p.468; Vār Sūhī, ślok 2 of paurī 17,
p.791.

³Japji ślok, p.8. In Vār Mājh (ślok 2 of paurī 18, p.146) this ślok
is attributed to Guru Aṅgad. The differences between the two versions
are insignificant apart from the addition of the word hora in the
last line of the Vār Mājh version.

with our deeds we dwell near Him or far off.
The labours of those who meditated on the Nam
are over. Their countenances are radiant and
many others (through association) with them
also find release.

Kari Eku dhiāvahi t̄an phalu pāvahi.....¹

Meditate on the One and harvest the fruit thereof.

An exhortation of this nature assumes, of course, that man has the necessary measure of freedom to make such a decision and this is also clear from the key line in Japjī:

Hukami rajāi chalaṇā Nānaka likhiā nāli.²

The word rajāi³ which Gurū Nānak uses here in conjunction with hukam is, as Gopal Singh has pointed out,⁴ from razā ("submission", "acquiescence") and implies an area wherein man has the capacity to exercise free will, a capacity which permits him to live in discord with the Hukam instead of in harmony with it. This faculty is obviously of critical importance for the manner in which it is exercised brings either salvation or continued transmigration. Disharmony is the normal condition, but it does not lead to Truth and its consequence is continued movement within the cycle of transmigration, with all

¹Vaḡahansu Alāhaṇī 2, p.580.

²Japjī (1), p.1. See supra p.512.

³Or razai.

⁴See supra p.513, n.3.

the attendant suffering of this condition. Submission, on the other hand, leads to union, the consequence whereof is freedom. He who recognises the Hukam perceives the Truth; and he who having recognised it brings his life into conformity with it ascends to that eternal union with God which is the ultimate beatitude.

Hukamu pachhānai Khasama kâ dūjī avara
sianapa kâi.¹

He who recognises the Master's Hukam has no need of any other wisdom.

Satiguru milai ta tisa kau jānai;
Rahai rajāi hukamu pachhānai;
Hukamu pachhāni sachai dari vasu;
Kāla bikāla sabadi bhae nāsu.²

He who meets the Satguru knows Him (God).
He recognises the Hukam and remains ever obedient to the will (of God). He who perceives the Hukam abides in the dwelling place of Truth. Birth and death (the cycle of transmigration) are destroyed by the Sabad.

The Hukam is accordingly an all-embracing principle, the sum total of all divinely instituted laws; and it is a revelation of the nature of God. In this latter sense it is identical in meaning with Sabad.

Āpī nai āpu sāji āpu pachhāniā;
Ambaru dharati vichhori chandoa tāniā;
Viṇu thamā gaganu rahai sabadu nisanā.³

¹Mārū 7, p.991.

²Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (7), p.832.

³Vār Malār, paurī 1, p.1279.

Thou didst create and Thou didst recognise (the true nature of Thy creation). Thou didst separate the heavens from the earth and Thou didst stretch out light in the heavens. Thou didst establish the sky without pillars and so revealed Thy Sabad

Again it is a case of basic identity with differing functions postulated only in order to bring out the fundamental truth with greater clarity. The creation is constituted and ordered by the Hukam and in this creation, physical and otherwise, the Sabad is made manifest. Understand this Principle and you understand God. Look around you and within you and you shall perceive the Sabad, the Nam, Truth. Herein is God revealed as single, as active, and as absolute; as Nirāikār, Nirāñjan, as the eternal One beyond all that is impermanent and corruptible. Meditate on this, conform your life to it, acquire a nature which in accordance with the law of karam will carry you beyond the cycle of birth and death. Thus you shall find salvation.

Satiguri miliai hukamu bujhīai tān ko āvai rāsi.
 Āpi chhuṭe naha chhuṭīai Nānaka bachani biṇāsu.¹

When one meets the Satgurū and understands the Hukam one attains to Truth. Salvation is not wrought through one's own efforts. Nānak, such a belief (lit. talk) amounts to destruction, (not salvation).

It is, as we have already noted, an extended process, an ascent, but in the end there is absolute harmony. With the ultimate

¹Vār Malār, ślok 1 of paurī 25, p.1289.

attainment of Truth, with the gurmukh in the final stage of union (Sach Khand) there is absolute fulfilment of the divine Hukam.

Jiva jiva hukamu tivai tiva k̄ara.¹

As the Hukam, so too the deed.

5. Sach

Sach, the fifth of Gurū Nānak's characteristic terms, does not require a detailed analysis for it too, as its normal meaning plainly indicates, is used to express the Truth and an analysis would simply mean covering ground which has already been covered.

Galī bhisati na jāiai chhūtai sachu kamāi.²

One does not go to heaven through mere talk
It is through acting in accordance with Truth
that one is released.

6. Nadar

How does God communicate with man? How does man perceive the nature of God and the means of attaining union with Him? The analysis of Śabad, Nām, Gurū, and Hukam has brought us well towards

¹ Japji (37), p.8. Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 5 (7-8), p.223; Gaurī Aṣṭ 15, p.227; Āsā Aṣṭ 16, p.420; Vār Āsā, paurī 15, p.471; Bilavalu Aṣṭ 2 (6-7), p.832; Mārū Solahā 5 (16), p.1025; Mārū Solahā 16 (9-14), pp. 1036-7; Sārang kī Vār, ślok 1 of paurī 11, p.1241.

² Vār Mājh, ślok 2 of paurī 7, p.141. Cf also: Sirī Rāgu 10, p.18; Sirī Rāgu Pahare 2 (5), p.76; Vār Mājh, paurī 13, p.144 and paurī 18, p.147; Vār Āsā, ślok 2 of paurī 10, p.468; Vaḍahansu Chhant 1 (1) pp. 565-6; Dhanasari Chhant 1 (1), p.687 (see supra p.498); Mārū Solahā 12 (9), p. 1032.

an answer, but there remains one significant gap. According to Gurū Nānak God has revealed His Truth in creation, and specifically in the Hukam which orders creation. He who perceives this Truth and submits to it will find salvation. But how are we to explain the manifest fact that only a minority of men perceive it? The Truth may be there for all to grasp, but few there be who in fact do lay hold of it.

Tere darasana kau keti bilalāi;
Viralā ko chīnasi Gura sabadi milāi.¹

Many there be who long for a vision of Thee,
but few who encounter the Gurū-Sabad and so
perceive (Thee).

Why are there so few? One explanation is that karam determines the issue. Those who in their previous existences have lived lives of relative merit acquire thereby a faculty of perception which enables them to recognise the Gurū. This theory has a logical consistency and in one place it would appear to be explicitly affirmed.

Pūrabī hovai likhiā tā Satiguru pāvai.²

If it is inscribed in the record of one's
former deeds then one meets the Satgurū.

Karam is one theory and the other is divine grace. According to the latter, the necessary faculty of perception is a gift from God

¹Basant Aṣṭ 3 (1R), p.1188.

²Āsā Aṣṭ 19 (5), p.421. Cf also Basant Hīṇḍol 12 (2), p.1172.

and one which is not ultimately dependent upon the merit of the individual in this or any existence.

The latter theory is the one which we must accept, but not at the cost either of maintaining that Gurū Nānak denied the relevance of karam as far as this initial perception was concerned, or of admitting that at this point he was inconsistent. Extracts which affirm a belief in divine grace have already been quoted¹ and such affirmations recur with considerable frequency in his writings. The above quotation from Āsā Aṣṭapadī 19 implies an inconsistency, but when the paucity of such references, direct or implied, is compared with the very considerable weight of emphasis which he lays upon his concept of divine grace there can be no doubt that in the last analysis it is this grace which must decide the issue. The solution which he himself provides to the seeming inconsistency is a compromise which does accord a necessary place to karam as far as the initial apprehension of the Śabad is concerned, but which specifies grace as the ultimate determinant. In a significant line from Japji he contrasts the two, karam and grace. Karam is certainly important in that it will produce a favourable or unfavourable birth, but it is through grace that the initial opportunity to lay hold of

¹ See supra pp. 478-9. See also supra pp. 450-465 (Sirī Rāgu Aṣṭ. 17) 475 (Sorāṭhi 8), 499 (Oaṅkāru 19), 506 (Vār Mājh, paurī 25) and 519 (Vār Malār, ślok 1 of paurī 25).

salvation is attained.

Karamī āvai kapaṛā nadarī mokhu duāru.¹

Our karam determines the nature of our birth
(lit. the cloth), but it is through grace that
the door of salvation (is found).

Even within its own domain the operation of karam is not irrevocably
determined, for He who is the Master of karam may in forgiveness
obliterate its effects.

Janama janama ke pāpa karama ke Kāṭanahārā
lījai re.²

Cleave to Him who cancels the karam earned
by the sins of many previous incarnations.

The question is for Gurū Nānak an ultimate mystery dependent
upon the choice which God makes. The characteristic term used to
express this is nadar or nazar, but as we have already noted³ the
same doctrine is expressed in the words kirpā, prasād, karam (the
Persian word), bakhsīś, bhāṇā, daia (dayā), mihar, and taras.

Nadari karahi je āpanī tā nadarī Satiguru pāiā.⁴

If Thou dost impart Thy grace then by that grace
the Satguru is obtained.

¹Japjī 4, p.2.

²Gaurī 16, p.156. Cf also: Vār Sūhī, ślok 2 of paurī 11, p.789.
Sārang Aṣṭ 2 (1R), p.1232.

³See supra p.486 , n. 2 .

⁴Vār Āsā, paurī 4, p.465.

Karamu hovai Satiguru milai būḡhai biḡhārā;
 Nāmu vakḡḡḡḡḡḡ suḡe nāmu nāme biuhārā.¹

He to whom God shows favour meets the Satguru
 and acquires understanding. He repeats the
Nām, listens to the Nām, and imparts the
Nām to others (lit. trades in the Nām).

Bagule te phuni hansulā hovai je tū karahi daiālā;
 Praṇavati Nānaku dāsani dāsā daiā karahu Daiālā.²

If Thou dost show mercy a heron becomes a swan.
 Thy slave of slaves Nānak makes this petition:
 Be merciful to me, O merciful One.

Nānaka nadarī bāhare rāchahi dāni na nāi.³

Nānak, those who are outside (His) grace have
 a concern for neither charity nor the Nām.

Sabha mahi varata Eko soi;
 Jisa no kirapā kare tisu paragaṭu hoi.⁴

He, the One, dwells within all, but He is
 revealed to him who receives grace.

Antari agiānu dukhu bharamu hai Gura giāni gavāi;
 Jisu kripā karahi tisu meli laihi so nāmu dhiāi.
 Tū Karatā Purakhu agamu hai raviā sabha ṭhāi;
 Jitu tū laihi sachia titu ko lagai Nanka guṇa gāi.⁵

¹Āsā Aṣṭ 13 (9), p.418.

²Bāsant Hinḡol 9, p.1171.

³Sirī Rāgu 4, p.15.

⁴Oaṅkaru (14), p.931.

⁵Vār Malār, paupī 28, p.1291.

Within us are ignorance, suffering, and doubt,
 but through the Guru's wisdom all are cast out.
 He upon whom Thou dost show Thy grace and whom
 Thou dost bring to Thyself, he it is who
 meditates on the Nām. Thou the Creator art
 ineffable, immanent in all. He whom Thou dost
 bring to the Truth - he it is who attains it.
 Nānak sings Thy praises.

In order that the Gurū's voice may be heard there must be
 a prior gift of perception and this gift comes by God's grace. If
 He gives it then the Sabad may be perceived and if He does not there
 is nothing a man can do. This in itself is not sufficient for sal-
 vation, for even if a man accepts the proffered gift he must engage
 in a sustained discipline before he can attain ultimate release.
 The gift is, however, a prerequisite.¹ Why it is given to some and
 withheld from others no man can say. There is much that must remain
 hidden from the limited understanding of man and the exercise of God's
 grace is of this nature. Man is not given a complete understanding
 of all mysteries. What he is given is a sufficient understanding.

The translation we have used here in most cases is 'grace',
 but a note of caution is required for the English word is liable to
 be misinterpreted in this context. The possibility arises from the
 fact that its usage in Christian theology assumes the specific Pauline

¹ Cf Bhāi Gurdās, Vār 1, paurī 24:

Pahilā Bābe pāyā bakhasu dari, pichho de phiri
 ghālī kamāi.

First Bābā (Nānak) obtained grace from the court
 (of God) and then afterwards (went forth) to labour.

doctrine of grace with its stress upon the universal nature and absolute sufficiency of grace for salvation. For a person nurtured in Sikh thought there is no problem, for he will take from the word 'grace' the meaning which is imparted by such words as nadar and kirpā in the context of Sikh scripture. The possibility of misinterpretation may exist, however, for the person whose background is Christian or western, and who may unconsciously read into the word specifically Christian connotations. 'Election' actually comes closer to Gurū Nānak's concept, but it is hardly a satisfactory alternative for it is too closely associated with neo-Calvinist theology and would almost inevitably be accorded an interpretation which implied an eternal predestination, leaving no scope for the determinative exercise of the individual's free will. 'Favour' and 'choice' are both appropriate, but yet fail to convey a sufficient depth of meaning, although the word bhāṇā which corresponds exactly to the first of these is one of the words which is used to express this particular doctrine.

'Grace' remains the best word to express this aspect of the divine nature whereby there is imparted an initial and prerequisite illumination.

Āpi bujhāe soi būjhai;
Jisu āpi sujhāe tisu sabhu kichhu sūjhai.¹

¹Var Mājh, ślok 2 of paurī 27, p.150.

He whom Thou has enlightened understands;
 he to whom Thou hast given insight perceives all.

Without this gift of perception, without a divine initiative, the Gurū will not be recognised. The gift alone does not mean automatic or irresistible salvation, for as we have already noted it must be accepted and the individual's life must be lived in accordance with what it imparts. Many, indeed most, to whom it is given refuse to accept it. Instead of listening to the Gurū's Sabad they fasten their affections on māyā, on the attractions of the world.

The various terms may also be used in a sense which refers to the individual's own effort to conform to the Truth rather than to the prior gift of perception.

Khasama kī nadari dilahi pasinde jinī kari
 eku dhiaīā.¹

The grace of the Master is on those who have meditated on Him with single mind, and they have found favour in His heart.

In other cases a better translation is 'mercy' or 'compassion' even when the word used is nadar rather than daiā or taras.

Asī bola vigāra vigāraha bola;
 Tū nadarī andari tolahi tola.²

We speak evil, but Thou dost judge us with mercy (lit. weigh us in the scales of grace).

¹Sirī Rāgu 27, p.24.

²Sirī Rāgu 30, p.25.

Normally, however, the various terms are used with reference to the divine initiative, the prior act of grace whereby God implants the perception which enables the individual to hear and to understand the Śabad. It is not salvation which is given, for this must be attained through the individual's own efforts. It is the prerequisite appreciation of the need for salvation and of the means to be followed in order to attain it - not salvation itself, but "the door of salvation".

Je juga chāre ārajā hora dasūñī hoi;
 Nava khaṇḍā vichi jāñīai nāli chalai sabhu koi;
 Chaṅgā nau rakhai kai jasu kīrati jagi lei;
 Je tisu nadari na āvai ta vata na puchhai ke;
 Kīṭā andari kīṭu kari dosī dosu dhare.¹

Even if one were to live throughout the four ages and ten times that number, even if one were to be known in the nine worlds and everyone were to follow him, possessed of a good name and renowned throughout the world - if such a person fails to catch the Lord's eye (if grace is not shown to him) then no one bothers with him. He is as a worm among worms, spurned even by the sinful.

Jevaḍu Sāhibu tevaḍu dātī de de kare rajāī.
 Nānaka nadari kare jisū upari sachi nāmī vaḍīai.²

Just as He, the Lord, is glorious so too are His gifts glorious, gifts which He gives in accordance with His will. He upon whom the (Lord's) gracious glance rests acquires the glory of the True Nam.

¹Japjī (7), p.2.

²Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paūrī 19, p.147. Cf also: Āsā 31, p.358; Āsā Aṣṭ 5, pp. 413-4; Vār Āsā, ślok 2 of paūrī 8, p.467; Sorāṭhi 3, p.596; Dhanāsari 3, p.661; Suhi Aṣṭ 2 (6), p.751; Vār Sūhī, ślok 1 of paūrī 15, p.790; Prabhātī Aṣṭ 3 (8), p.1343 (see infra p.591).

God has expressed Himself in the Śabad which He Himself as Gurū communicates to man. If by His grace any man be blessed with the perception which enables him to understand the Śabad he will discern around and within him the nature of God and the means of attaining union with Him.

The next question concerns the effort which each individual must make in order to appropriate the Truth and in order to answer this we must first consider Gurū Nānak's doctrine of man.

III The Nature of Unregenerate Man

Mere Sāhibā kauṇu jāṇai guṇa tere!
 Kahe na jāṇī augaṇa mere.
 Kete rukha birakha hama chīne kete pasū upāe;
 Kete nāga kulī mahi āe kete paṅkha uḍāe.
 Haṭa paṭaṇa bija mandara bhanai kari chorī ghari āvai;
 Agahu dekhai pichhabu dekhai tujha te kaha chhapāvai.
 Taṭa tīratha hama nava khaṇḍa dekhe haṭa paṭaṇa bājārā;
 Lai kai takarī tolai lāga ghaṭa hī mahi vaṇajārā.
 Jeta samundu sagaru nīri bharīa tete augaṇa hamāre;
 Daiā karahu kichhu mihara upāvahu ḍubade pathara tare.
 Jīārā agani barābari tapai bhītari vagai kātī;
 Prapavati Nānaku hukamu pachhaṇai sukhu hovai dinu rātī.¹

O my Lord, who can comprehend Thy excellences!
 None can recount my sinfulness.
 Many times was I born as a tree, many times as an
 animal, many times I came in the form of a snake, and
 many times I flew as a bird.
 Many times did I break into city shops and strong
 buildings and, having burgled them, return home.
 I looked ahead and behind (to ensure that I had not
 been detected), but how could it be concealed from
 Thee?

¹Gaurī 17, p.156.

(I have visited) places of pilgrimage on river-banks, tīraths, shops, cities, markets; I have seen all regions of the world. Taking scales I have weighed (my merits against my demerits) in my heart.

As the oceans are filled with water, so immense is my sinfulness. Be merciful, show a measure of Thy grace that this sinking stone may cross over. An undying fire burns in my soul, within (my heart) a knife twists. Nanak prays: (Show me Thy grace for he who by it) understands Thy Hukam attains eternal peace.

Karaṇī kagadu manu masavaṇī burā bhalā dui lekha pae;
Jiu jiu kiratu chalāe tiu chaliāi tau guṇa nāhi antu Hare.
Chita chetasi kī nāhi bāvarīa;
Hari bisarata tere guṇa galīa.
Jālī raini jalu dinu hua jetī gharī phāhi tetī;
Rasi rasi choga chugahi nita phasahi chhūṭasi mure
kavana guṇī.
Kāiā arapu manu vichi lohā pañcha agani titu lagi rahī;
Koile papa pare tisu upari manu jaliā sanhi chinta bhai.
Bhaiā manuru kañchanu phiri hovai je Guru milai tinehā;
Eku namu amritu ohu devai tau Nānaka trisaṭasi deha.¹

On the book of conduct the man, like ink, records inscriptions, some good and some bad. As his nature (determined by his deeds) drives him so a man goes; but Thy excellences are infinite, O God. O foolish mind, why do you not remember God. If you forget Him your virtues melt away. The day and night are as nets set for you; there are as many traps as there are gharīs. Indulging your desires you continually peck at the bait and are caught. Fool! What virtue will set you free. The body is a forge with the man the iron in it; five fires (the five evil impulses)² heat it continually. Sins are laid on as coal and over it the man is heated, held by the tongs of fear. Reduced to slag it yet becomes gold when it meets the Guru, for He imparts the one amrit Nam and so brings the body under control.

¹Maru 3, p.990:

²See infra p. 548.

Man's nature is for Gurū Nānak dependent upon his affiliation, and that nature is transformed when his affiliation is transferred from the world to the Nām. It is the nature of unregenerate man which concerns us at this point, the nature of man in the condition of attachment to the world. This is the condition of pride, of self-centredness, of sin and so of death and transmigration. This is the condition which must be transcended if man is to attain release from transmigration.

For Gurū Nānak the key to an understanding of man's nature is an understanding of the human man. Cleanse the man and it becomes a fitting abode for the Nām. Control it and you will no more wander from the One with whom you seek union. But let it retain its impurity, let it remain unbridled, and the penalty will be Death. Yam will seize you, bind you and march you off to his prison. There you will continue to suffer in the round of birth and death.

1. The Man

Mani jītai jagu jītu.¹

To conquer the man is to conquer the world.

The word man as used by Gurū Nānak has no satisfactory English translation. It is usually rendered 'mind', but the translation is

¹Japji (28), p.6.

unsatisfactory as the English word lacks the breadth of meaning and association which man possesses in Sant literature and Sikh scripture. It is true that the concept of mind is included within the range of man and that it is the dominant concept covered by the word. To translate it in this way alone, however, is inadequate in the context of Guru Nanak's usage.

Man is a version of manas, a word with a lengthy history. In the Rg Veda it denotes 'soul' and is very close in meaning to ātman.¹ In the Upaniṣads the two terms tend to diverge, with manas moving towards chitt and assuming a quality best translated as 'mind',² whereas ātman becomes identified with the inmost essence in man.³ In Vedanta manas emerges explicitly as an aspect or function of antahkaraṇ, the seat of collective thought and feeling.

Vedanta does not regard manas (mind) as a sense (indriya). The same antahkarana, according to its diverse functions, is called manas, buddhi, ahamkara, and citta. In its functions as doubt it is called manas, as originating definite cognitions it is called buddhi. As presenting the notion of an ego in consciousness ahamkara, and as producing memory citta.⁴

¹S. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. i, pp. 25-6.
A. Berriedale Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads, Vol. ii, pp. 403-4.

²Cf Chāndogya Upaniṣad, vii.3.i.

³S. Dasgupta, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 45-6. Dr. Radhakrishnan identifies the manas of the Upaniṣads with the antahkarana and uses 'mind' to translate it, but maintains a close relationship between the two terms. (The Principal Upaniṣads, p.471.)

⁴S. Dasgupta, op.cit., Vol. i, p.472, n.1.

In these terms Gurū Nānak's understanding of the man could be described as synonymous with antahkaran in that it embraces all of these functions, insofar as they are distinguished in his thought, and is used interchangeably with buddhi, chitt, and antahkaran itself. The comparison would, however, be misleading, for Gurū Nānak was not a Vedantist. His concept lacks the sophistication of developed Vedanta doctrine and extends to areas which are excluded from the antahkaran of Vedanta. It comes much closer to the Yoga notion of the manas as "the inner sense".¹ Even here, however, the marked divergence from Yoga as a developed and integrated philosophy makes comparison risky, although there can be no doubt that in this, as in so much else, the Sant concept has roots in Nāth doctrine.²

An impression of the range of meaning which the word covers in Gurū Nānak's works can be gathered from the actual contexts in which it is used and from other terms which are used in similar contexts and which are obviously synonymous with aspects of man. It is with the man that one makes decisions and particular emphasis is laid upon its function as moral arbiter.

¹M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p.20.

²See infra p. 538.

Mana kā kahīā manasā karai;¹
Ihu manu punu pāpu ucharai.

The man proceeds as the man itself dictates.
Sometimes it expresses virtue, sometimes sin.

The man is the faculty by means of which Truth is apprehended:

Mani sākā mukhi sākau bhāi;
Sachu nīśānai thāka na pai.²

In his man is Truth and so Truth is in (the
words of) his mouth also. With Truth as his
banner he finds no obstacle remaining.

And it is with the man that one meditates:

Mani bīchāri Eka liva lāgi punarapi janamu na kālā.³

Meditate in your man, cleave in union to the One,
and the round of birth and death is at an end.

Srī Rāma nāmā ucharu manā!
Āgai Jama dalu bikhamu ghanā.⁴

Repeat the Nām of God, O man, for ahead
lie the powerful hosts of Yam.

In all of these the translation 'mind' would be appropriate⁵ and it
is not surprising that such words as surati, chitt, budhi, and mati
occur in similar contexts.

¹Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (1), p.832.

²Bilāvalu Thitī (9), p.839.

³Gūjarī Aṣṭ 1 (4), p.503.

⁴Gaurī 14, p.155.

⁵Cf also: Japjī (20), p.4 (see infra p.578); Āsā Aṣṭ 8, p.415;
Var Āsā, paurī 3, p.464.

Gandhāṇa vaiṇi ratā hitakārī sabadai surati na āi.¹

(The manmukh) loves to wallow in filthy speaking;
the Sabad has not lodged in his surati.

Bharīai mati_pāpā kai saṅgi;
Ohu dhopai navai kai raṅgi.²

If the mati be defiled by sin it is cleansed through
love of the Nām.

In his commentary on this latter passage Vīr Singh uses man, mati,
buddhi, and antahakaraṇ interchangeably.³ In such contexts 'mind'
is clearly indicated.

Other contexts, however, extend the meaning to express what
in English is usually covered by 'heart'.

Je sakatā sakate kau māre tā mani rosu na hoī.⁴

If the strong smites the strong the man is not
grieved.

It is difficult to draw precise bounds between 'mind' and 'heart',
but emotions of this nature are generally associated with the latter
word. We also find the man specified as the seat both of such evil
qualities as lust and anger and of the bhagat's love for God.

¹Sorathī 3, p.596.

²Japjī (20), p.4.

³Vīr Singh, Santhya, Vol. i, p.101.

⁴Asā 39, p.360.

Bhītari pañcha gupata mani vāse;
 Thiru na rahahi jaise bhavahi udāse.
 Manu merā Daiāla setī thiru na rahai;
 Lobhī kapaṭī pāpī pākhaṇḍī māiā adhika lagai.¹

Within my man lurk the five (evil impulses)
 and so like a wandering udāsī it has no
 resting place. My man has not found its resting
 place in the Merciful Lord for it is firmly
 attached to māyā (and so is caught up in) greed,
 deceit, sin, and hypocrisy.

Gāvīai supīai mani rakhīai bhāu.²

Sing (of Him), hear (His praises), love
 (Him with all your) man.

Elsewhere ghaṭ, hiradā, ridā, dil, or ur are used interchangeably
 with man, for all are used to designate the specific abode of God
 within each individual.

Sūche sei Nānakā jina mani vasiā soi.³

Nānak, they are pure in whose mans He dwells.

Jina kai hiradai Hari Hari soi,
 Tina kā darasu parasi sukhu hoi.⁴

¹Āsā 34, p.359.

²Japjī (5), p.2. Cf also: Japjī (21), p.4; Āsā Aṣṭ 7 (2), p.414;
 Āsā Chhant 3 (1), p.437; Var Āsā, ślok 2 of paurī 18, p.473; Gūjarī
 Aṣṭ 5 (5), p.505 (see *infra* p.577); Oaṅkāru (44), p.936 (see *infra* p.559)

³Var Āsā, ślok 2 of paurī 17, p.472; Cf also: Āsā Aṣṭ 8, p.415; Āsā
 Paṭṭī Likhī (13), p.433; Sūhī 2, p.728; Sūhī Aṣṭ 3 (3), p.752; Sūhī
 Chhant 5 (6), p.767.

⁴Gaurī Aṣṭ 16 (4), p.228; Cf also *supra* pp.475-6 and: Gaurī 11, p.154;
 Āsā 16 (1), p.353; Bilavalu Thitī (13), p.840.

They in whose hearts God dwells behold
Him and so obtain (supreme) joy.

Nor is this the limit, for man is also used to cover what in English we normally seek to express with the word 'soul'. This applies to the usage which refers to the indestructible quality of the man. In such cases neither 'mind' nor 'heart' is adequate. The man is mind and it is heart, and it is also that human attribute which does not perish with physical death and which man must seek to unite with God,¹ which he must strive to have carried across the Ocean of Existence.

E mana meriā tū thiru rahu choṭa na khāvahi rāma;
E mana meriā guṇa gavahi sahaji samāvahi rāma.
Guṇa gāi Rāma rasāi rasīahi Gura giāna añjanu sārāhe;
Trai loka dīpaku sabadi chanaṇu pañcha dūta saṅghārahe.
Bhai kaṭi nirabhau tarahi dutaru Guri miliai kārāja sārāe;
Rūpu raṅgu piāru Hari siu Hari āpi kirapā dhārae.²

Be still, my man, and you shall not suffer hurt.
Sing (His) praises, my man, and you shall enter
into supreme tranquillity. Sing God's praises and
you shall taste His sweetness. Apply the antimony
of the Guru's enlightenment (to your inward eyes) and
by the light of that lamp which, fed by the Śabad,
illuminates the whole universe you shall slay the
five devils.³ So shall you destroy your fears and in
fearlessness you shall cross the dread Ocean of Exist-
ence. You shall meet the Guru and find fulfilment.
He upon whom God bestows grace finds a fullness of
spiritual stature, spiritual joy, and love for God.

¹"Guranatt dā param pad āpape man nūn Nirāṅkār vich joṛanā hai."
Jodh Singh, Guramati Niranay, p.218.

²Tukhārī Chhant 6 (3), p.1113. See also anks (4-5). Cf also Oaṅkāru (42), p.935 (infra p.558).

³The five evil impulses. See infra p.548.

Here we find man assuming the qualities of jīv and ātma.

One solution to this translation problem is to translate man as 'mind' in some contexts, 'heart' in others, and 'soul' in yet others. In circumstances where an English word must be found if possible this is perhaps necessary, but such translations will normally fail to bring out the fullness of meaning which the term possesses. It is strictly untranslatable, for there is nothing in English which combines the functions of the mind, the emotions of the heart, and the qualities of the soul. Man is mind, heart, and soul. It is the faculty with which one thinks, decides, and feels, the source of human good and evil, and that one indestructible attribute which must be released from the body and merged in the being of God.

In laying this stress upon the role of the man Gurū Nānak stands within a well-developed tradition. Dr. Vaudeville has described the importance which the man held for the Siddhs and the Nāths.¹ and to illustrate Kabīr's understanding of it she gives in her Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr a translation of his Gaurī 28, in which she interprets man as 'âme'.

Le caractère est inhérent à l'âme:
 Qui donc a jamais obtenu le salut en triomphant de
 son âme?
 Où donc est l'ascète qui a vaincu son âme?

¹Ch. Vaudeville, Kabīr Granthāvalī (Dohā), p.xvi, and Au Cabaret de l'Amour: Paroles de Kabīr, p.211, n.XXXV.

Dis-moi, qui donc a jamais obtenu la Délivrance
par la défaite de l'âme?

Pourtant, chacun éprouve cette certitude au fond
de l'âme;

Le prix de l'amour divin, c'est la victoire sur
son âme

Ceux qui ont pénétré ce mystère, dit Kabîr,
Contemplant en leur âme le Seigneur, le Maître
de l'Univers.¹

Gurū Nānak's understanding of the man is essentially that
of Kabîr. The man of unregenerate man is erratic and leads him
into worldly attachments which are the very antithesis of salvation.

Manu chañchalu bidhi nāhī jāñai;
Manumukhi mailā sabadu na pachhañai.²

The man is unsteady; it does not know the
way. The man who puts his trust in his own
man is as one befouled and does not recognise
the Śabad.

It is not, however, an inveterate enemy. It is to be restrained,
but not crushed, for this same man is something priceless, the
treasury which contains all treasures, the abode of God Himself if

¹Kabîr, Gaurî 28, p.329.

Mana ka subhāu manahi biāpi;
Manahi māri kavana sidhi thapī?
Kavanu su muni jo manu mārāi?
Mana kau māri kahahu kisu tārāi?
Mana antari bolai sabhu koī;
Mana mare binu bhagati na hoī.
Kahu Kabîra jo jāñai bheu,
Manu Madhusūdanu tribhavapa Deu.

Cf also KG (13) Nana kau ānga (Vaudeville, Kabîr Granthāvalī (Dohā),
pp. 26-29).

²Āsā Aṣṭ 7 (8), p.415.

man will but recognise it.

Manu māṇaku niramolu hai Rāma nāmipati pāi.¹

The man is (like) a priceless pearl. Through (dwelling on) God's Nam it has been accorded honour.

Mana mahi māṇaku lālu nāmu ratanu padārathu hīru;
Sachu vakharu dhanu nāmu hai ghaṭi ghaṭi gahari
gambhīru;
Nānaka guramukhi pāiai daia kare Hari hīru.²

In the man are the jewels of the Nam, its pearls, its rubies, its diamonds. The Nam is the true merchandise, the true wealth, deep down in every heart. If the grace of God (lit. Hari the diamond) is upon a man, with the Guru's aid he obtains the Nam.

In unregenerate man, however, the man is impure, unrestrained.

Its evil propensities are permitted to assert themselves and in consequence man remains a slave to his passions and so to Death.

Manu bhūlau bharamasi ai jāi.
Ati lubadha lubhānau bikhama māi.
Naha asathiru dīśai Eka bhāi;
Jiu mīna kuṇḍaliā kaṇṭhi pāi.
.....
Manu bhūlau bharamasi bhavara tāra;
Bila birathe chāhai bahu bikāra.
Maigala jiu phāsasi kāmāhāra;
Karī bandhani bādho sīsa mārā.
.....
Manu chalai na jāi ṭhāki rākhu;
Binu Hari rasa rāte pati na sākhu.
Tū āpe suratā āpi rākhu;
Dhari dhārā dekhai jāpai āpi.³

¹Sirī Rāgu 22, p.22.

²Sirī Rāgu 21, p.22. Man and ghaṭ are here used interchangeably.

³Basant Aṣṭ 2 (1), (2), and (4), pp. 1187-8. Cf also Āsā Aṣṭ 8, p.415.

The heedless man is a wanderer, a vagrant.
Greedy beyond measure, it has indulged its
desire by drinking the poison of māyā. Never
does it find its peace in love of the One (God).
It is like a fish which (because of its desire
to grasp the bait) is caught in the gullet by a
hook.....

The heedless man wanders like a bumble-bee,
seeking through its senses to indulge in many
foolish evils. Like an elephant it is trapped
because of its lust. It is bound and its head
is jabbed with a goad.....

The man is ever straying, never held in check.
If it be not filled with love for God He can
give it neither honour nor trust. Thou art the
omniscient One, the Protector of all. Thou dost
uphold Thy creation, watching over all.

2. Haumai

Jiu āraṇi lohā pāi bhani gharāīai;
Tiu sakatu jonī pāi bhavi bhavāīai.
Binu bījhe sabhu dukhu dukhu kamāvapā;
Haumai avai jāi bharami bhulāvaṇa.¹

As iron is thrown into a furnace, melted,
and recast, so is he who fastens his affections
on māyā incarnated again and again.
Without understanding (of the Śabad) all he
gathers is suffering upon suffering. (Through
the influence of) haumai he transmigrates
and wanders in doubt.

In unregenerate man the dominant impulse is that of haumai,
a concept which is to be found in Kabīr and other sants, but which
receives appreciably more emphasis in the works of Gurū Nānak. For

¹Sūhī Aṣṭ 4 (1-1R), p.752.

Gurū Nānak it is haumai which controls the man of unregenerate man and so determines the pattern of his life. The results are disastrous, for instead of leading a man to release and salvation his haumai will invariably stimulate affections which can only bind him more firmly to the wheel of transmigration.

The usual translation of haumai¹ is 'ego', and her example of a translation which is neither incorrect nor entirely satisfactory. The English word is certainly a literal translation,² but it is misleading for two reasons. The first is that it has already been appropriated in Indian philosophy to express a notion which has an equally literal original, but which offers a meaning different from that which haumai covers in Gurū Nānak's works. In Vedānta ahaṁkāra is an expression of ajñāna, a "blending of the unreal associations held up in the mind (antaḥkaraṇa) with the real, the false with the true that is the root of illusion."³ This definition, in spite of the etymological connection and the fact that the word has moved away from a neutral meaning, is not what Gurū Nānak meant, for it does not possess the moral content which is so strongly implied in haumai.

¹Or, in relevant contexts, of hau or āp.

²Hau - Main, "I - I".

³S. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. i, pp. 458-9.

Nor is 'ego' anywhere near haumai when used in a Yoga context, for in this case it is clearly neutral and precedes the emergence of manas in the evolutionary process.¹

A second reason why there is a risk of misunderstanding is that the word 'ego' has at least three clearly defined usages in the West and none of them can be said to accord with Gurū Nānak's usage. In its strictly philosophical application the term has a neutral meaning which is certainly not the case with haumai; in a psychological context it is too closely identified with Freudian theory; and in its popular usage it has declined into something resembling 'morale'.

Macauliffe's translation was 'pride'.² It is true that garab and hañkār are closely related to haumai and that in certain contexts they may be used in a sense which corresponds to it.

Garabu nivāri gaganapuru pāe.

.....
Kari kirapā gharu mahalu dikhāiā,
Nanaka haumai māri milāiā.³

Casting out pride we ascend to celestial
heightsThrough His grace (the Gurū)

¹M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p.20. There is, however, an obvious affinity between haumai and the icchā ('desire') of the Yoga-vasiṣṭha. (S. Dasgupta, op.cit., Vol. ii, p.264).

²E.g. The Sikh Religion, Vol. i, p.227. Cf also Jayaram Miśra, Sri Guru Granth Darśan, p.120.

³Gaurī 9, p.153.

reveals (God's) palace (within our own frame).
Nanak, casting out our haumai (the Guru)
unites us with God.

Nīanu gavaiã duja bhāiã garabi gale bikhu khāiã.
Gura rasu gita bada nahi bhavai supiai gahira
gambhiru gavaiã.....
Eko eku kahai sabhu koī haumai garabu viāpai.¹

Love of māya has destroyed understanding. (Such
a person) rots in his pride, he eats poison. He
takes no delight in singing the Guru's songs, nor
in hearing His words. Consummate pride has over-
thrown him.....Everyone declares Him to be
One, but all are encompassed by haumai, by pride.

In general, however, garab and hañkār must be regarded not as synonyms
for haumai, but as a result of it.

Another possible translation for haumai is 'sin'. It is not
a literal translation in the way that 'ego' is, but its meaning cor-
responds closely. In its strict Christian theological usage 'sin'
is always singular. It means self-willed disobedience to God, a
condition naturally inherent in man and expressing itself in a multi-
tude of ways. It would be difficult to distinguish this condition
from haumai, for in fact the two correspond almost exactly. Just
as such impulses as pride and greed are properly regarded as the
results of sin, so too do we find that the five traditional evil
impulses² are the offspring of haumai. In both cases the evil im-

¹Oaṅkārū (4) and (5), p.930.

²Kam, krodh, lobh, moh, and hañkār. See infra pp.548.

pulses are regarded as the expressions in an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions of a condition which determines the direction of those thoughts, feelings, and actions.

There is, however, an obvious and serious objection to the use of 'sin' as a translation. 'Sin', like 'ego', has its popular usage. It is a usage which is correct in its own right, but which differs from the strict theological definition. In general usage 'sin' refers to what is properly conceived as the result of sin and it is frequently used in the plural. This clearly does not correspond to haumai.¹ A discussion of the theological term 'sin' can certainly clarify the meaning of haumai, but the word itself does not provide us with a satisfactory translation. It could not be called incorrect, but it would invite misunderstanding.

'Self' and 'self-centredness' are also possible translations. In English 'Self' is used in a bad sense which comes close to haumai and its meaning in this sense has not been seriously distorted by popular usage. In this particular context, however, it is liable to be misunderstood because in Indian philosophy it has so commonly been used in its neutral sense as a translation of ātman. This leaves us with 'self-centredness' which is perhaps the best available, but which is also unsatisfactory, in that it will frequently impart a weaker

¹It is covered by such words as ṭāp, gunāh, apṛādh.

and more limited meaning than that which haumai was intended to give.

It is unfortunate that there is no really satisfactory English equivalent, for in the thought of Gurū Nānak this word haumai epitomises the condition of unregenerate man.

Hau vichi āiā hau vichi gaia;
 Hau vichi jamiā hau vichi muā;
 Hau vichi ditiā hau vichi laiā;
 Hau vichi khaṭiā hau vichi gaia;
 Hau vichi sachiāru kūrīaru;
 Hau vichi pāpa puna vichāru.....¹

In haumai he comes and in haumai he goes;
 In haumai he is born and in haumai he dies;
 In haumai he gives and in haumai he takes;
 In haumai he acquires and in haumai he casts away;
 In haumai he is truthful and in haumai he lies;
 In haumai he pays regard sometimes to virtue and
 sometimes to evil.....

Everything that a man does is done in the context of this condition which pervades the whole of his activity. Even that which men call right or good is done only if it accords with the individual's haumai, and if it is not in accord it is rejected in favour of that which is evil. The result is that the path of salvation is hidden. Attention is absorbed in māyā and so the round of birth and death continues. Only when one perceives the true nature of this condition does there come a recognition of the way of salvation.

¹Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paūrī 7, p.466.

Mokh mukati kī sara na jāṇā;
 Hau vichi māiā hau vichi chhaiā;
 Haumai kari kari janta upaiā;
 Haumai būjhai tā daru sujhai;
 Giāna vihuṇā kathi kathi lūjhai;
 Nanaka hukamī likhiāi lekhu;
 Jehā vekhai teḥā vekhu.¹

(In haumai) he fails to perceive the true nature of salvation. In haumai there is māyā and its shadow (which is doubt). By acting in accordance with haumai he causes himself to be born again and again. If he understands his haumai he perceives the door (of salvation), but without understanding he argues and disputes. In accordance with the Hukam our karam is inscribed. He who discerns the Hukam discerns his haumai also.

The person who fails to discern the Hukam is a manmukh.

His loyalty is to himself, to the wayward impulses of his own man instead of to the voice of the Gurū. The gurmukh hears and obeys the Gurū's Śabad; the manmukh ignores it. Offered truth, freedom, and life he chooses instead falsehood, bondage, and death, for such is the fate of him who has not purged haumai from his man.

Manamukha kī mati kūrī viāpī;
 Binu Hari simarāṇa papi santāpī.²

¹Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paūrī 7, p.466. The last line is obscure and the commentators disagree in their interpretations. Concerning haumai cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 13, pp. 226-7; Āsā Aṣṭ 3 (6), p.413; Vār Maru, ślok 2 of paūrī 14, p.1091; Bhairau Aṣṭ 1 (1R), p.1153; Mālār 3, p.1255.

²Āsā 24, p.356. Cf also: Vār Mājh, paūrīs 15 & 16, p.145; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 1 (7), p.831; Rāmākālī Aṣṭ 5 (6), p.905; Siddh Goṣṭi (26), p.941.

The manmukh's mind is clogged with falsehood.
He does not meditate on (the Nam of) God and so
suffers the penalties of sin.

3. Evil Impulses

The outward expressions of a man dominated by haumai are
the evil passions and by this fruit the manmukh is to be known.

Sāvaṇu rāti ahāṇu dihu kām krodhu dui kheta.
Labu vatra darogu biu hālī rāhaku heta.
Halu bīcharu vikāra maṇa hukamī khaṭe khāi.¹

Day and night are the two seasons (sāvanī and
hari) when he crops his land; lust and anger
are his two fields. He waters them with greed,
sows in them the seed of untruth, and worldly
impulse, his plough-man, cultivates them. His
(evil) thoughts are his plough and evil is the
crop he reaps, for in accordance with the Hukam
he cuts and eats.

Traditionally these evil passions are five in number - kām (lust),
krodh (anger, wrath), lobh (covetousness), moh (attachment to
worldly things), and haṅkāra (pride). From these five basic impulses
spring all the deeds of violence and falsehood which earn an adverse
karam and so endlessly protract the cycle of transmigration.

Avari pañcha hama eka janā kiu rākhau ghara
baru manā?
Mārahi lūṭahi nīta nīta kisu āgai karī pukāra
janā.²

¹Vār Rāmakalī, ślok 1 of paurī 17, p.955.

²Gaurī 14, p.155.

My adversaries are five and I am but one.
 How shall I defend my house, O man?
 Daily they strike me and plunder me. To
 whom shall I cry?

Hansu hetu lobhu kopu chāre nadīā agi;
 Pavahi dajhahi Nānakā tarīai karami lagi.¹

Violence, attachment to worldly things,
 covetousness and wrath are four streams of
 fire and they who fall into them are
 consumed. Nānak, clinging, through grace,
 (to the Gurū's feet²) one is saved.

Such impulses and the actions which proceed from them are the marks of the manmukh, of the self-willed, unregenerate man. They are the outward evidences of an impure man filled not with love of the Nām, but with love of self. And these are the snares of Yam, of Death.³ He who falls into them must assuredly suffer the endless misery of death and rebirth.⁴

4. Māyā

Tījai paharai raipī kai vapajāriā mitrā dhana
 jobana siu chitu;
 Hari kā nāmu na chetai vapajāriā mitrā badhā
 chhuṭahi jitu.
 Hari kā nāmu na chetai prāpī bikalu bhaiā saṅgi
 māia;

¹Vār Mājh, ślok 2 of paurī 20, p.147.

²The line preceding the couplet quoted above indicates that this is the meaning.

³See infra p.556.

⁴Cf also: Vār Āsā, ślok 2 of paurī 11, p.468; Mārū Aṣṭ 8 (4), p.1014; Mārū Solahā 2, p.1022; Tukhārī Chhant 4 (1), p.1111; Basant Aṣṭ 2 (2), p.1188.

Dhana siu ratā jobani matā ahilā janamu gavāiā.
 Dharama setī vapāru na kīto karamu na kīto mitu;
 Kahu Nānaka tijai paharai prāṇi dhana jobana
 siu chitu.¹

My merchant friend, (you who deal in worldly things),
 in the third watch of the night² you fix your attention
 on wealth and the bloom of youthful beauty and do not
 remember the Nam of God which brings release. Forgetting
 the Nam of God the soul is led astray through keeping the
 company of māyā. Absorbed in wealth, intoxicated by
 bodily beauty, it fritters its opportunity away. You
 neither adhered to your duty nor performed good deeds.
 Nānak says: The third watch is the period of the soul's
 attachment to money and carnal beauty.

A wayward man dominated by haumai inevitably means involvement
 in māyā.

Labā lobha ahaṅkāra kī māṭī māiā māhi samāṇī.
 Inī batī Sahu paiai nāhi bhai kamaṇi iāṇī.³

She who is caught up in greed, covetousness, and
 pride is sunk in māyā. Foolish woman! The
 Lord is not found by such means.

Māyā in the thought of Gurū Nānak is not the cosmic illusion
 of classical Vedānt. The world is indeed māyā, but it is not unreal.
 It is an illusion only in the sense that it is accepted for what it
 is not. Delusion is a more appropriate word. The essence of the world
 is its impermanence. It is real, but it is impermanent, both in the
 sense that it is itself perishable and in the sense that its attributes

¹ Sirī Rāgu Pahare 1 (3), p.75.

² i.e. the third stage of the human life: (1) Birth, (2) Childhood,
 (3) Adulthood, (4) Death.

³ Tilāṅg 4, p.722.

cannot follow a man after his physical death. It offers qualities which are accepted as both good and desirable, but which constitute a fraud, a deception. He who accepts the world in this way and who accordingly seeks fulfilment in attachment to worldly things is a victim of māyā, of the pretence that these attachments if not actually Truth itself are at least not inimical to Truth.

Māyā is basically untruth as opposed to Truth and the expression of this untruth is the world. It is in worldly affections, in the desire to appropriate the things of this world, that man's great temptation lies and succumbing to this temptation means involvement in untruth. The result can only be separation from God and continued transmigration. Māyā is añjan, literally the black collyrium applied to eyes, but traditionally the symbol of darkness and untruth. God, on the other hand, is Nir-añjan, the One who is wholly apart from all that is false, the One who is Himself Truth. Man must choose one or the other, for Truth and its antithesis cannot co-exist.

Rasu suinā rasu rupā kāmāṇi rasu paramala kī vāsu;
 Rasu ghoṛe rasu sejā mandara rasu mīṭhā rasu māsu;
 Ete rasa sarīra ke kai ghaṭi nāma nivāsu.¹

¹ Sirī Rāgu 4, p.15.

The love of gold and silver, women and fragrant scents, horses, couches, and dwellings, sweets and meats - these are all lusts of the flesh. Where in the heart is there room for the Nām?

The question is obviously a rhetorical one. If man accepts the world's attractions, if he accepts the pretences of māyā, he must inevitably choose to be separated from God. This is what unregenerate man does. Blinded by ignorance (agīān, avidyā), led astray by doubt (bhram) and forgetfulness (bhulekhā), he accepts the world at its own valuation. But it is māyā, it is a fraud (kapaṭ), a deceit (ohhal), untruth (kūr, jhūṭh), a snare (jāl), and the penalty for accepting it is inexorable. By accepting it man involves himself in dubidhā, in "duality", in all that stands in opposition to union, in that separation which must divide the self-willed manmukh from God. He rejects Life and chooses instead Death.

Sākata kūrē sachu na bhāvai;
Dubidhā bādā āvai jāvai.¹

Māyā's disciple² is false; he dislikes the truth. Bound up in dubidhā he transmigrates.

Some of the practical manifestations of māyā are set out in the extract quoted above from Siri Rāgu 4.³ Wealth, women, sons,

¹ Mājh Aṣṭ 1 (5), p.109. Cf also: Bhairau Aṣṭ 1 (8), p.1153; Sāraṅg 3, p.1198; Prabhātī Aṣṭ 1 (1-4), p.1342.

² Sakat. The word is the Arabic sāqit ('fallen', 'depraved'), not the Sanskrit sākta, a worshipper of śakti. In Guru Nanak's works it refers to one who is involved in māyā.

³ Supra p. 551.

power, status, worldly honour, comfort, food - these are the attractions which the world extends and which call forth man's lust, greed and pride.¹ These are the allurements which stimulate his evil impulses and so lead him into the trap.

Kanika kamanī hetu gavārā;
Dubidhā lāge namu visārā.²

For the love of silver and women the fool
is entangled in dubidhā and forgets the Nām.

None of this, however, endures.

Māiā sañchi rāje ahañkāri;
Māiā sāthi na chalai piāri.³

Accumulating māyā (wealth, power, status) kings
vaunt themselves, but the māyā to which they are
so attached does not accompany them (after death).

Bābā māiā rachanā dhohu;
Andhai namu visāriā nā tisu eha na ohu.⁴

Bābā, the world is māyā, a trap.
The blind man forgets the Nām and so gains
neither this world nor the next.

¹Macauliffe uses "Mammon" as a translation of māyā (e.g. The Sikh Religion, Vol. i, p.22). The word is useful in that it brings out the basic antagonism between māyā and God, but it is inadequate for it limits the application of māyā to worldly wealth. Sampad (wealth) is certainly one of the primary manifestations of māyā in Guru Nanak's works, but so too is kaman (woman). Other temptations receive less emphasis, but obviously they are not to be regarded as negligible.

²Āsā Aṣṭ 9 (2) p.416.

³Prabhātī Aṣṭ 1 (2), p.1342.

⁴Sirī Rāgu 3, p.15.

Māyā is, of course, the work of God for it consists in the creation and is inseparable from it.

Raṅgī raṅgī bhātī kari kari jinasī māiā jini upāi;
Kari kari vekhai kitā āpaṅa jiva tisa dī vaḍiāi.¹

He who created the various colours, kinds and aspects of māyā, having brought His creation into being watches over it, the manifestation of His greatness.

Māyā is an interpretation of the creation, or rather a misinterpretation of it, a misunderstanding of its nature and purpose.

The creation is both a revelation of God and a snare. What matters is a man's response to it. If he perceives the revelation he is on the way to salvation. If, on the other hand, he regards it as a means of indulging his haumai he is on the road to ruin. It can be either his ally or his enemy, an opportunity or a trap, a firm path or a quicksands. Even evil is from God and is to be regarded as an aspect of man's opportunity.

Ketiā dukha bhūmha sada mārā;
Ehi bhi dāti terī Dātārā.²

Many are endlessly afflicted by pain and hunger, but even these, O Giver, are Thy gifts.

Vīr Singh adds to this comment:

Because as a result of this gift many people develop fear, abandon sin, and attain to the higher life.³

¹Japjī (27), p.6.

²Japjī (25) p.5.

³Vīr Singh, Santhya, Vol. i, p.120, n.1.

All depends on the response which a man makes, and unregenerate man makes the wrong response.

Bābā āiā hai uṭhi chalaṇā ihu jagu jhūṭhu pasārovā.
 Sachā ghara Sacharai sevīai sachu khara sachiārovā.
 Kūrī labi jān thāi na pasī agai lahai na thāo.
 Antari āu na baisahu kahīai jiu suñai ghari kāo.
 Jamanu maranu vaḍā vechhora binasai jagu sabāe.
 Labi dhandhai māiā jagatu bhulāiā kālū khara rūāe.¹

Bābā, having come (into the world) one must depart again; this world is a fleeting show. The abode of Truth is found through serving the True One; attainment of Truth comes only by living in accordance with Truth, by following the path of Truth. Falsehood and covetousness disqualify a man and in the hereafter there is no place for him. No one invites him to enter and take his rest; he is like a crow in a deserted house. The cycle of birth and death is the great separation and caught up in it everyone is destroyed. Being involved, through greed, in the concerns of mayā people are led astray, and Death, standing over them, causes them to weep.

5. The Fate of Unregenerate Man

Khasamu visāri kiē rasa bhoga,
 Tan tani uṭhi khaloe roga.²

They who have forgotten the Lord and indulged in sensual pleasures - they are the ones whose bodies are diseased.

¹ Vaḍahansu Alāhaṇī 5, pp. 581-2. Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 3, p.222; Var Suhi, ślok 2 of paurī 4, p.786; Bilāvalu 3, p.796; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 1 (4), p.831; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (1R), p.832; Ramakālī Aṣṭ 7, pp. 906-7.

² Malar 7, p.1256.

He who ignores God and follows instead the dictates of haumai is as one diseased. A remedy exists, but for the manmukh who refuses it the result can only be Death.

Aphariu k̄alu k̄uru siri m̄arai.¹

Ineluctable Death smites the head of the false.

By Death in this sense Gurū Nānak does not, of course, mean the physical death which inevitably overtakes every person. Physical death, far from being something to be feared, is for the gurmukh a joy to be welcomed when it comes, for it means a perfecting of his union with God. Gaurī 20² which is recited each night by devout Sikhs as a part of Kīrtan Sohilā is a beautiful expression of the contentment with which a believer awaits his physical death and final release. The manmukh's Death, however, is not the perfecting of union but the culmination of separation. To illustrate his meaning Gurū Nānak uses a variety of figures. The most common is the Vedic Yam who also figures prominently in the imagery of the sants.

Nāi terai sabhi sukha vasahi mani āi;
Binu nāvai bādhi Jama puru jāi.³

¹Gaurī Aṣṭ 14 (5), p.227.

²AG, pp. 12 and 157.

³Prabhātī 1, p.1327. The epithets used by Gurū Nānak are the common ones found in the works of the sants - Dharamraj (with his assistants Chitr and Gupt) and Kāl. Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 14 (3), p.227; Oaṅkāru (14), p.931; Mārū Solahā 11 (10), p.1031; Mārū Solahā 20 (8), p.1041.

Through Thy Nam the man finds total bliss.
Without the Nam one goes bound to the city
of Yam.

Another is narak, the nether region, but demythologised as in
Christian theology.

Namu visāri dokha dukha sahīai;
Hukamu bhāiā chalāpā kiu rahīai;
Naraka kupa mahi gote khāvai jiu jala te
bāhari mīna he.¹

He who forgets the Nam must endure suffering.
When the Hukam bids one depart, how can he remain?
He is submerged in the well of Hell (and dies as
surely) as a fish without water.

The various figures all point to the same thing. Submission to
one's haumai and entanglement in māyā earn a karam which per-
petuates the transmigratory process. In the constant coming and
going there is separation from God and this is Death.

Igu Karate kau kiu gahi rākhau aphaṛio tulio na jāi.
Māiā ke devāne prāpi jhūṭhi ṭhagaurī pāi.
Labhi lobhi muhataji vigute iba taba phiri pachhutaī.
Eku sarevai tā gati miti pavai āvaṇu japu rahai.

.....
Avapi jāpi vigūchīai dubidha viāpai rogu.
Nāma vihupe ādamī kalara kandha giranti.
Vipu nāvai kiu ohuṭīai jāi rasātali anti.....
Tuṭi tantu rababa kī vajai nahī vijogi.

.....
Jiu machhulī phāthī Jama jāli.
Vipu Gura Date mukati na bhali.
Phiri phiri āvai phiri phiri jāi.

.....
Māiā māiā kari mue māiā kisai na sāthi.
Hansu chalai uṭhi ḍumapo māiā bhulī āthi.
Manu jhūṭhā Jami johiā avaguna chalahi nali.....
Merī merī kari mue vipu nāvai dukhu bhali.
.....

¹Maru Solahā 8 (8), p.1028.

Suina rūpā sañchīai dhanu kāchā bikhu chhāru.
 Sāhu sadāe sañchi dhanu dubidhā hoi khuāru.¹

How can one grasp the Creator, He who is beyond comprehending, immeasurable. The soul is deluded by māyā, drugged by untruth. Ruined by the demands of greed, (such a person) repents eternally, but he who serves the One knows Him, and his cycle of birth and death comes to an end Transmigration desolates us, the disease of dubidhā has spread everywhere. A man who is without the Nam collapses like a wall of sand. How can one be saved without the Nam? (Such a person) must ultimately fall into Hell..... (The separated soul is like) the broken string of a rebeck - severed and so producing no music (Man) is caught like a fish in Yam's net. Without the Gurū, the Giver, there is no salvation, one continually transmigrates..... (Innumerable people) have died begging māyā (to sustain them) but māyā accompanies no one (after death). The swan (soul) mounts up and sadly flies off leaving māyā here. The man which pursues untruth is tormented by Yam and with it go its evil qualities.....Those who focussed their attention on themselves died. Without the Nam they received suffering.

.....
 One may accumulate gold and silver, but such wealth is but poison, ashes. Gathering wealth (a man) considers himself to be an exalted person, (but his belief is vain). Caught up in dubidhā he is destroyed.

IV. The Discipline

It has already been observed how the first paurī of Japji expresses within a single couplet both the problem of salvation and

¹Oaṅkāru (6), (32), (39), (42), and (48), pp. 930, 934, 935-6, 937.
 Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 16 (5), p.228; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (5), p.832;
Mārū Aṣṭ 1 (4), p.1009.

its answer.

Kiva sachiārā hoīai kiva kūrai tuṭai pāli?
Hukami rajai chalapā Nanaka likhia nāli.¹

Oaṅkārū offers another summary statement:

Rāpā rāu na ko rahai raṅgu na tuṅgu fakīru.
Vari apo apai koi na bandhai dhīra.
Rahu burā bhihavalā sara gūgara asagāha;
Mai tani avagana jhuri mui viṇu gupā kiu ghari jāha.
Gupā gupā le Prabha mile kiu tina milau piāri?
Tina hi jaisī thī rahan japi japi ridai Murari.
Avagūpi bharapūra hai gupā bhī vasahi nāli.
Viṇu Satagura gupā na jāpanī jicharu sabadi na
kare bīcharu.²

The problem stated:

No one remains, neither kings nor faqīrs, neither poor nor rich. No one can stay when his turn comes. The way is difficult, frightening, over seas and impassable mountains. I waste away because of the evil qualities within me. Without the necessary qualities (gunas) how can one enter into peace (lit. house)? Those who possess these qualities meet the Lord. How can I meet them in love?

And the answer:

By meditating on God in my heart I shall become like Him (acquire His gunas). (My heart) is filled with evil, but in it there dwell gunas also. Without the Satguru these are not perceived and until then one does not meditate on the Sabad.

¹Japjī (1), p.1. See supra p.

²Oaṅkārū (44), p.936.

The answer is two-fold. Salvation depends both upon God's grace which is expressed by the Gurū in the Śabad, and upon the individual's own effort to cleanse himself of all evil and so appropriate the salvation which is offered to him. We must now turn to the second of these, the sādhana or discipline which Gurū Nānak propounded as the individual's necessary response to the imparted Śabad. In this section we shall consider first the paths which he rejected and then the one which he affirmed. The goal is union with God. The prerequisite is a recognition of Him in all creation and in particular within the individual man. The way itself is meditation with adoring love upon the divine qualities revealed through such an understanding. The concomitant result is the cleansing and disciplining of the man, and a life progressively brought into total accord with His Hukam. And the end result is release from transmigration and the blending of the man in a union with God which transcends all human expression. Śabad sunanā, Śabad mananā, Nām japnā, Hukami chalnā, man jorā. It is a pattern which denies the efficacy of all that is external or mechanical. For Gurū Nānak inward devotion of a specific kind is the way of salvation.

1. Interior Religion

There is much obscurity in Kabīr, but at one point he is immediately and strikingly clear. No reader can possibly misunderstand

the emphasis upon religion as a wholly inward experience, and the imprecations which he hurls at all who trust in pride of birth or in outward ceremony have lost nothing of their mordant effect. Gurū Nānak does not manifest the same pugnacity, but his attitude in this respect is no less firm and clear. He too lived in an environment which set great store by birth, scriptures, ceremonies, and ascetic practices, and like Kabīr and other sants he inevitably denounced them as entirely alien to true religion.

Paṛi paṛi bhūlahi choṭā khāhi;
 Bahutu siapapa āvahi jāhi;
 Nāmu japai bhau bhojanu khāi;
 Guramukhi sevaka rahe samai.
 Puji sila tīratha banavāsa;
 Bharamata ḡolata bhae udāsa;
 Mani mailai sūchā kiu hoi;
 Sachi milai pavai pati soi.¹

They who read (scriptures) continually and forget (their spiritual duty) suffer the punishment (of spiritual death). For all their wisdom they continue to transmigrate. They who remember the Nam and make fear (of God) their (spiritual) food - such servants, with the Guru's aid, dwell in union (with their Master).

If the man is unclean how can it be purified by worshipping stones, visiting tīraths, living in jungles, wandering around as an ascetic? He who is united with the True One is the person who acquires (eternal) honour.

The brāhmins do not receive a measure of scorn comparable with that

¹Dhanāsarī Aṣṭ (2 (5-6), p.686.

shown by Kabīr, but we are left in no doubt concerning Guru Nanak's attitude towards brāhmanical pretensions.

Suṇi paṇḍit karamākārī,
Jitu karami sukhu upajai bhāi su ātama tatu bichārī.
Sāsatu bedu bakai kharo bhāi karama karahu sansarī;
Pakhaṇḍi mailu na chūkai bhāi antari mailu vikārī;
Ina bidhi ḡbī makurī bhāi upḍi sira kai bhārī.¹

Hear me, paṇḍit, you who put your trust in all your religious works. The work which brings peace is meditation upon spiritual reality. You stand up and recite the Sastras and Vedas, but your actions are those of the world. Inner filth and evil are not cleansed by hypocrisy. You are like a spider caught upside down (in the web you have spun).

Suine kā chaukā kañchana kuāra;
Rupe kia kara bahutu bisantharu;
Gaṅga ka udaka karante kī agi;
Garura khana dudha siu gaḍi.
Re mana lekhai kabahu na pai;
Jami na bhījai sācha nai.
Dasa aṭha likhe hovahi pāsi;
Chare beda mukāgara pāṭhi;
Purabī navai varanan kī dati;
Varata nema kare dina rati.
Kajī mūlan hovahi sekha;
Jogī jaṅgama bhagave bhekha;
Ko girahī karama kī sandhi;
Binu būjhe sabha kharīasi bandhi.²

One may have a cooking-square of gold and utensils of gold, (marked off) with lines of silver, immensely protracted, water from the Ganges, a fire kindled with flint, and light food soaked in milk.

¹ Sorāṭhi Aṣṭ 2 (1R-2), p.635.

² Basant 3, p.1169. Cf also: Var Āsā, ślok 2 of paurī 16, pp. 471-2; Var Āsā, ślok 1 of paurī 19, p.473; Ramakali Aṣṭ 4, p.904; Var Malar, ślok 2 of paurī 25, pp. 1289-90.

But all these things are of no account, O man, unless one be infused with the true Nām. One may have a hand-written copy of the eighteen Purāṇas and be able to recite the four Vedas by heart, one may bathe on auspicious days, give to each according to the rules prescribed for each caste, fast and observe regulations day and night; one may be a qāzī, a mullāh, or a sheikh, a yogī, a jaṅgam, or one wearing ochre robes; one may be a householder and live accordingly, but without the understanding (which comes from meditation on the Nām) all are bound and driven off (to the abode of Yam).

According to the Purāṭan janan-sākhīs this was the pad delivered to the extraordinarily scrupulous brāhmaṇ who had refused even the uncooked food offered to him by Gurū Nānak, preferring instead to dig a cooking-square of unimpeachable purity. Wherever he dug, however, he found bones and after digging all day he finally accepted the Gurū's food.¹ Needless to say the incident has no evident historical basis, but its spirit certainly accords with Gurū Nānak's attitude towards caste status and purity regulations. In him we find the characteristic sant rejection of caste as a necessary qualification for religious understanding. Gurū Nānak emphatically condemned pride based upon caste status, notions of purity and contamination arising out of caste divisions, and above all any suggestion that caste standing was either necessary or advantageous in the individual's approach to God.

¹Pur JS, sākhī 38, p.72. See supra p.215.

Jāpahu jōti na pūchhahu jāti āgai jāti na he.¹

Perceive (in all men) the light (of God) and
do not ask (a man's) caste for in the hereafter
there is no caste.

Phakara jāti phakaru nāu;
Sabhañā jīā ikā chhau.
Apahu je ko bhalā kahāe;
Nānaka tā paru jāpai jā pati lekhai pāe.²

Caste and status are worthless (aids to
salvation) for the One (Lord) watches over
all (lit. is the shade of all) (regardless
of their caste or status). If anyone exalts
himself the true extent of his honour will be
revealed when his record is produced (in the
Lord's court).

Ghia paṭa bhāṇḍā kahai na koi;
Aisā bhagatu varana mahi hoi.
Terai nāmī nive rahe livā lai;
Nānaka tina dari bhikhiā pai.³

No one questions (the antecedents) of the con-
tainer (which holds) ghī or silk. (Their purity
is acknowledged regardless of such considerations.)
Such also is the case of the bhagat (the container
of the Nām), no matter what his caste may be. Nānak,
beg at the door of those who have submitted to the
Nām and remain absorbed in it.

Ai jī nā hama utama nīcha na madhima Hari
sarapāgati Hari ke loga.⁴

¹Āsā 3, p.349.

²Sirī Rāgu kī Vār, ślok 1 of paurī 33, p.83.

³Tilāṅg 2, p.721.

⁴Gūjārī Aṣṭ 4 (1), p.504. Cf also: Sirī Rāgu 7, p.16; Vār Mājh, paurī 10, p.142; Āsā Aṣṭ 14, pp. 418-9; Vār Āsā, ślok 3 of paurī 11, p.469; Suhi 8, p.730. Mārū 11, p.992; Sarāṅg 3, p.1198; Mālār 6, p.1256; Vār Mālār, ślok 2 of paurī 23, p. 1288; Prabhātī 10, p.1330.

We who have taken shelter in God are neither high,
low, nor in between. We are God's servants.

Impurity, he declared, lay not in differences of birth, but in
the condition of the individual's man.

Kubudhi ḡumanī kudaiã kasāipi paranindā ghaṭa
chuharī muṭhī krodhi chaṇḍālī;
Kārī kaḡhī kiā thīai jān chāre baiṭhīa nāli.
Sachu saṭjama karapī karan navaṇu nāu japehī;
Nānaka agaĩ utama seĩ ji pāpān pandi na dehī.¹

Your evil mind is a ḡumanī, your cruelty a
kasāipi, your malicious speaking a chuhri,
your anger a chaṇḍālari,² and all have led you
astray. Why mark off a cooking-square when the
four (outcastes) already keep you company? Let
Truth be your method (of drawing a cooking-square)
and righteous deeds your lines. Let repeating of
the Nam be your ritual ablution. Nānak, hereafter
the person who does not teach sinful ways is the
one who will be exalted.

This rejection of such notions was common among the sants and
was particularly strong in the case of Kabīr.³ In Gurū Nānak's case

¹Sirī Rāgu kī Vār, ślok 1 of paurī 20, p.91.

²The female members of four outcaste groups - Doms (or Dūmanā), Kasāis,
Chuharās, and Chaṇḍāls. The ḡumanī evidently refers to the caste of
sweepers and corpseburners which has been regarded as the type of all
uncleanness and which in the Panjab is found chiefly in the hills and
sub-montane areas. (Sir D. Ibbetson, Panjab Castes, No. 654, pp. 333-4.)
The Mirāsī caste of Muslim genealogists and musicians (to which Mardāna
belonged) are also called Doms, but it is unlikely that the reference is
to this group for it possesses an appreciably higher status than that
of the sweeper Doms. (Ibbetson, op.cit. No. 527, pp. 234-5).

³Kabīr, Mārū 9, p.1105. Bhairau Aṣṭ 1, p.1162 (= KG pad 328).
Śloks 56, 57 and 82, pp. 1367, 1368. KG doha 30:10.

it may have received a practical expression. One of the most attractive aspects of Sikhism is the laṅgar, the intercommunal refectory which is always attached to a gurdwārā. There can be little doubt that the institution was developed as a deliberate attack on caste distinctions, but as we have already seen¹ it is not entirely clear whether it was first established by Gurū Nānak or by Gurū Amar Dās. Although the balance of probability strongly favours the latter there can be no doubt that the laṅgar expressed an ideal which we find in Gurū Nānak's works. It was an ideal which his successors faithfully upheld and in 1699 it received sacramental expression in the baptismal ceremony instituted by Gurū Gobind Singh at the founding of the Khālsā.²

Other expressions of external religion suffered a similar fate at Gurū Nānak's hands. Trust in good works alone is rejected.

Gura kau jāpi na jāpai kiā tisu chaju achāru?³

The man who possesses knowledge and yet does not know the Gurū, of what use are his good works and ceremonies?

Idolatry is ridiculed.

¹See supra p.

²For Bhāi Gurdās' testimony to Gurū Nānak's attitude towards caste see Vār 1, paurī 23 (supra p. 176.).

³Sirī Rāgu 13, p.19.

Hindū mūle bhūle akhuṭī janhī.
 Nāradi kahīā si pūja karanhī.
 Andhe guṅge andha andharu;
 Pātharu le pūjahi mugadha gavāra;
 Ohi jā āpi ḡube tuma kaha tarapahāru!¹

The Hindūs straying in abysmal forgetfulness have followed the wrong path. As Narada taught, so they worship (idols). Blind and dumb (they walk) in pitch darkness, worshipping this ridiculous stone which they have set up. But it sinks so how can it carry you across?

Devī devā pūjīai bhāī kiā māgau kiā dehi?
 Pahāpu nīri pakhālīai bhāī jala mahi būḡahi tehi.²

Gods and goddesses are worshipped, but what can one ask of them and what can they give? The stones (the idols) are washed with water, but they sink in water (and so are useless as vessels to carry you across the Ocean of Existence).

Bathing at tīraths is rejected as completely ineffective.

Nāvapa chale tīrathī manī khoḡe tani chora,
 Iku bhāu lathī nātīā dui bhā charīasu hora.
 Bahari dhotī tumarī andari visu nikora.
 Sadha bhale āpanatīā chora si chorā chora.³

If anyone goes to bathe at a tīrath with an evil man and the body of a thief, one part (the exterior) is cleansed by the bathing, but the other (the man) becomes even filthier (because of pride). Externally he is washed like a faqīr's gourd, but inside he is poison and impurity. A sādhū⁴ possesses goodness even if he does not bathe and a thief, even if he bathes, remains a thief.

¹Vār Bihāgarā, ślok 2 of paurī 20, p.556.

²Soraṭhi Dutukī 4 (6), p.637. Cf also: Gūjarī 1, p.489; Vār Sāraṅg, ślok 1 of paurī 9, pp. 1240-1.

³Vār Sūhī, ślok 2 of paurī 12, p.789.

⁴I.e. a bhagat.

Tīrathi nāvapa jāu tīrathu nāmu hai;
 Tīrathu sabada bīchāru antari giānu hai.
 Gura giānu sāchā thānu tīrathu dasa puraba sadā
 dasāharā;
 Hau nāmu Hari kā sadā jāchāu dehu Prabha
 Dharapīdharā.¹

Shall I go and bathe at a tīrat The true
tīrath is the Nām; it is inner contemplation
 of the Sabad and it is jīan. The Guru's jīan
 is the true tīrath where every day (and not just
 two) is propitious. O Lord, Sustainer of the
 earth, I crave Thy Nām eternally. Grant it (I
 pray Thee).

Nor is salvation to be found in ascetic practices, in abandoning
 the world in order to pursue an itinerant life, particularly if
 the renunciation is a hypocritical one designed to provide a life
 of ease and responsibility.

Giāna vihūnā gāvai gīti;
 Bhukhe mulan ghare masīti;
 Makhaṭu hoi kai kana paṛae;
 Phakaru kare horo jāti gavāe;
 Gurupīru sadāe māngana jāi;
 Tā kai muli na lagīai pāi.
 Ghālī khāi kichhu hathahu dehi,
 Nanaka rāhu pachhāpahi sei.²

¹Dhanāsari Chhant 1 (1), p.687. This extract is also of interest in that it illustrates Guru Nanak's usage of giān (jīan). The word does not normally possess any particular significance in his thought and neither does it appear with any great frequency. When it does appear it usually corresponds to Sabad as in the extract quoted here. The only instance where it is given a particular significance is in Japji (35), p.7, where it is used to designate the second of the five khands. (See infra p.595-6).

Concerning Guru Nanak's rejection of the effectiveness of bathing at tīraths cf also: Japji (21), p.4 (see infra p.573); Āsā Chhant 2 (3), p.437. (see infra p.592); Sorathi 9, p.598; Prabhati 6, pp. 1328-9.

²Vār Sārang, ślok 1 of paurī 22, p.1245. Cf also: Sirī Rāgu 22, p.22; Āsā Aṣṭ 17, p.420; Bhairo 8, p.1127; Vār Malār, paurīs 15 and 25, pp. 1284-5 and 1290. (see supra p. 476).

He who sings songs (about God) without understanding them; who converts his house into a mosque in order to satisfy his hunger; who, being unemployed, has his ears pierced (so that he can beg as a yogī); who becomes a faqīr and abandons his caste; who is called a guru or a pīr but who goes around begging - never fall at the feet of such a person.

He who eats what he has earned by his own labour and gives some (to others) - Nānak, he it is who knows the true way.

The last couplet indicates the positive aspect of this particular rejection. Asceticism is rejected; a disciplined worldliness is affirmed. The way of Truth consists, in this respect, of living in the world yet unaffected by the attractions of the world. It is a common emphasis among the sants and Gurū Nānak uses the conventional image of the lotus to illustrate it.¹ The refrain of Sūhī 8, a pad which was evidently addressed to Kanphaṭ yogīs, is a striking expression of this belief.

Añjana māhi Nirañjani rahīai joga jugati iva
pāīai.

The path of true Yoga is found by dwelling in God while yet living in the midst of the world's temptations.²

In this context it is to be noted that family attachments are not upheld as good or permissible. On the contrary they too are of

¹Cf Gauṛī 5, p.152. Rāmakaṭī 4, p.877.

²Sūhī 8, p.730.

the nature of worldly attachments and are accordingly to be avoided.

Ghara ghumāṇavāṇī bhāī;
Pāpa pathara tarāṇu na jāī.¹

Domestic involvement is a whirlpool;
the sin (which lies upon us? is a stone
which cannot cross over (the Ocean of Existence).

It is, however, the attachment, not the family itself which is to be spurned. Those who love the Nām neither ought to isolate themselves nor need to do so in order to avoid such attachments.

Sachi simariāi hovai paragāsu,
Tā te bikhīā mahi rahai udāsu;
Satigura kī aisi vādīāi,
Putra kalatra viche gati pāī.²

Meditation on the True One brings illumination
and so one lives detached in the midst of evil.
Such is the greatness of the Satgurū that even
surrounded by wife and sons one can attain sal-
vation.

This freedom from attachment while yet living in the midst
of temptations to attachment is the proper pattern for the bhagat.³
Ascetics and yogīs wander in vain.

¹Mārū 2, p.989-90.

²Dhanāsarī 4, p.661. Cf also: Vār Mājh, paurīs 3 and 5, pp. 139, 140; Siddh Gosṭi (29), p.941.

³Nāmedev's Rāmakalī 1, p.972, is an effective answer to the charge that such a life must be inconsistent with true devotion. Cf also Kabīr's śloks 212 and 213, pp. 1375-6, and Ravidās's Bilāvalu 2, p.858.

Suine kai parabati guphā karī kai pañī paiāli;
 Kai vichi dharatī kai ākāsī uradhi rahā siri bhāri;
 Puru kari kāiā kaparu pahirā dhovā sadā karī;
 Bagā ratā pīalā kālā bedā karī pukāra;
 Hoi kuchīlu rahā malu dhāri duramati mati vikāra;
 Nā hau nā mai nā hau hovā Nānaka sabadu vīchāri.¹

If I live in a cave in a mountain of gold or remain immersed in water; if I remain buried in the earth, or ascend into the sky, or remain suspended head down; if I clothe myself completely and wash (my clothes) endlessly;² if I read the white, red, yellow, and black Vedas at the top of my voice, or remain unwashed³ (it is all in vain for) all (such practices) are error and evil misconception. Only if one meditates on the Sabad does haumai go.

Qāzīs, paṇḍits, and yogīs in their traditional pursuits are all astray.

Kādi kūrū boli malu khāi;
 Brāhamaru nāvai jīā ghāi;
 Jogī jugati na jāpai andhu;
 Tīne ojaṛe kā bandhu.⁴

The qāzī utters lies and eats what is unclean;
 The brāhmar takes life and then goes off to bathe ceremoniously;
 The blind yogī does not know the way;
 All three are desolated.

¹Var Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 4, p.139.

²I.e. if I become a Kāparī.

³Evidently directed against the Jain sarevarās. Var Mājh, ślok 1 of paurī 26, pp. 149-50, directs a sustained attack against their practices. (Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.149, n. + .)

⁴Dhanāsarī 7, p.662.

True religion is not to be found in external practices, but in the inward disciplines of love, faith, mercy, and humility, expressed in righteous and compassionate deeds and in the upholding of all that is true.

So jogī jo jugati pachhāpai;
Gura parasādi Eko jāpai.
Kājī so jo ulaṭī karai;
Gura parasādi jīvatu marai.
So brahamāṇu jo Brahamu bīchārai;
Āpi tarai sagale kula tārai.¹

The true yogī is he who recognises the way,
who by the Gurū's grace knows the One.
The true qazī is he who turns away (from the world)
and by the Gurū's grace dies while yet
remaining alive.
The true brahmāṇ is he who meditates on Brahma.
He saves himself and all his kin.

Mihara masīti sidaku musalā haku halālu kurāṇu.
Sarama sunati sīlu rojā hohu musalamāṇu.
Karapī kābā sachu pīru kalāmā karama nivāja,
Tasabī sā tisu bhavasī Nānaka rakhai lāja.²

Make mercy your mosque, faith your prayer-mat,
and righteousness your Qur'an.
Make humility your circumcision, uprightness your
fasting, and so you will be a (true) Musalmān.
Make good works your Ka'bah, Truth your pīr and
compassion your creed and your prayer.
Make the performance of what pleases (God) your
rosary and Nānak he will uphold your honour.

Sālagrāma bipa pūji manāvahu sukritu tulasī mālā.
Ramanāmu japi beṛā bāndhahu daiā karahu Daiālā.

¹Dhanāsarī 7, p.662.

²Vār Mājh, ślok 1 of paūrī 7, pp. 140-1.

Kāhe kalarā siñchahu janamu gavāvahu?¹
Kāchi dhahagi divāla kāhe gachu lāvahu?

(Make the Merciful Lord) your sālgrām, your object of worship,
O paṇḍit, and good deeds your tulsi-mālā.
Construct a boat by repeating the Nam of Rām
and pray that the Merciful One will show mercy
to you.
Why waste your life in irrigating barren land?
Why plaster a mud wall when it will surely fall?

2. Love

Tīrathu tapu daiā datu dānu,
Je ko pāvai tila kā mānu.
Sunia manīā mani kitā bhāu,²
Antaragati tīrathi mali nāu.

If one gains anything from visiting tīraths,
austerities, acts of mercy,³ and charity it
is of negligible value. He who has heard,
believed, and nurtured love in his man has
cleansed himself by bathing in the tīrath
which is within.

The tīrath is within. Religion is inward and its basic
expression is love. This love, a love directed to the formless
Lord, is the vital response required of all who have perceived the
presence of God suffused throughout creation, and in whom has been

¹ Basant Hingol 9, p.1171. Cf also: Vār Mājh, paurī 24, p.149;
Āsā 32, p.358; Vār Āsā, śloka 1 of paurī 6, pp. 465-6; Vār Āsā,
śloka 1 of paurī 8, p.467; Vār Āsā, ślokas 1 & 2 of paurī 14, p.470;
Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 3 (4), p.904; Rāmakalī Aṣṭ 4, p.904; Tukhāri Chhant,
Barah-māhā (15), p.1109; Vār Malār paurī 25, p.1290. (See supra p.476.)

² Japjī (21), p.4.

³ The references are clearly to acts performed with the intention of
acquiring merit.

awakened a longing for union with Him. It is at this point that Gurū Nānak shares with the sants a particular debt to Vaiṣṇava bhakti and to the imagery of Sūfism. There is in his works the characteristic Vaiṣṇava emphasis upon the absolute necessity of love and there is frequent use of the Sūfī figure of the bride yearning for her Beloved.

Bhagati prema āradhinta Sachu piāsa parama hinta,
Bilalāpa bilala binatīa sukha bhāi chita hinta.¹

He who worships the True One with adoring love,
who thirst for the supreme love, who beseeching
cries out, finds peace for in his heart (lit.
chitt, mind) is love.

So Hari janu Hari Prabha bhāvai,
Ahi nisi bhagati kare dinu rātī lāja chhoḍi Hari
ke guṇa gāvai.²

God, the Lord, is pleased with him who constantly
adores Him (lit. performs bhakti), who renounces
the world's values and sings God's praises.

Dhana sohāgaṇi nāir jini Piru jāpiā jīu.³

Blessed is the bride, the woman who knows her Husband.

¹Gujarī Aṣṭ 5 (1), p.505.

²Rāmakalī 10, p.879. Cf also: Sirī Rāgu Pahare 2(5), p.76; Vār Āsā, ślok 2 of paūrī 13, p.470; Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 1 (3), p.685 (see infra p. 603 .); Dhanāsari Chhant 3 (2), p.689; Sūhī 5, p.729; Maru Solahā 21 (11), p.1042.

³Dhanāsari Chhant 3 (5), p.689. For other examples of the bride figure see supra p. 446 n. 4 .

In addition to the basic bhakti emphasis, we find in Gurū Nānak's works the more important of its corollaries. There must be fear of God, a recognition of His infinite immensity and of His absolute authority.

Bhau muchu bhārā vaḍā tolu;
 Manamati haulī bole bolu.
 Siri dhari chālīai sahīai bhāru.
 Nadarī karamī Gura bīchāru.
 Bhai binu koi na laṅghasi pāri;
 Bhai bhau rākhiā bhāi savāri.¹

Fear (of God) is of great weight and hard to bear; the wayward mind, with all its effusions, is light. (And yet) he who carries on his head (fear of God), can bear (its) weight. By grace he meditates on the Gurū's (teaching). Without such fear no one crosses (the Ocean of Existence), but if one dwell in fear to it is added love.

There must be a complete surrender to Him, an unconditional submission in faith.

Sahu nerai dhana kamaliē bāharu kiā ḍhūḍhehi?
 Bhai kiā dehi salaīā naiṇī bhāva kā kari sīgāro.
 Tā sohāgaṇī jāṇīai lāgi jā Sahu dhare piāro.

 Jāi puchhahu sohāgaṇī vāhai kinī bātī Sahu pāīai.
 Jo kichhu kare so bhalā kari māṇīai hikamati
 hukamu chukāīai.
 Jā kai premi padārathu pāīai tau charaṇī chitu lāīai.
 Sahu kahai so kījai tanu mano dījai aisā paramalu
 lāīai.
 Eva kahahi sohāgaṇī bhaiṇe inī bātī Sahu pāīai.²

¹Gaurī 1, p.151.

²Tilāṅg 4, p.722.

The Lord is near at hand (within you), foolish bride. Why seek him without? Let fear be the salāī¹ (with which you apply antimony to your) eyes and let your adornment be that of love. She who loves her Master is regarded as the bride united with Him
 Go and ask (those who are already the Master's) brides by what means they found Him. (A bride replies:) "Accept whatever He does as good, put no trust in your own cleverness and abandon the exercise of your own will. Fix your mind on His feet. (Cleave to Him) through whose love the priceless treasure is obtained. Do whatever He says; anoint yourself with the perfume of total surrender to Him." Thus replies the bride, "O sister, by this means the Lord is found."

And there must be singing of God's praises.

Jini seviã tini paiã mānu;
 Nānaka gāvīai guṇī nidhānu.
 Gāvīai suṇīai mani rakhīai bhāu.....²

He who serves Him wins honour (in His court),
 so sing His praises Nānak, (sing of Him) the
 Treasury of excellences. Sing His praises,
 hear them, love Him

Nānaku ākhai ehu bīchāru:
 Sifatī gaṇḍhu pavai darabāri.³

This is the belief which Nānak proclaims:
 It is through the singing of (His) praises
 that we find a place in the Lord's court.
 (Lit. are joined to the Lord's court.)

¹A small metal instrument used for applying antimony to eyes.

²Japjī (5), p.2.

³Vār Majh, ślok 2 of paurī 12, p.143.

All of these are aspects of traditional bhakti and they represent a significant area of agreement between the Vaiṣṇava bhagats on the one hand and Gurū Nānak on the other. There are, however, basic differences separating them. In the first place, as we have already observed,¹ there is in Gurū Nānak's works an explicit rejection of avatārs. Like the sants he addressed his devotion direct to God Himself, supreme and non-incarnated, not to any manifestation or intermediary. Secondly, there is Gurū Nānak's understanding of the practical expression of love, enunciated in his interpretation of Nām japnā or Nām simarānā. This interpretation is of fundamental importance. It provides the heart of his sādhana and in it we find his distinctive understanding of the believer's proper response.

3. Nām japnā

Ihu jagu moha heta biāpinta dukhu adhika janama
marāṇa;
Bhaju sarāṇi Satigura ūbarahi Hari nāmu rida ramāṇa.²

This world is entangled in attachment and so in the immense suffering of birth and death. Flee to the Satgurū's shelter. There repeat Hari's Nām in your heart and so attain salvation.

¹See supra p. 467.

²Gūjarī Aṣṭ 5 (5), p.505.

Nāme rāte haumai jāi;
 Nāmi rate Sachi rahe samāi;
 Nāmi rate joga jugati bīcharu;
 Nāmi rate pāvahi mokha duaru;
 Nāmi rate tribhavāna sojhī hoi; ¹
 Nānaka nāmi rate sadā sukhu hoi.

Nānak, he who is steeped in the Nām
 is freed from his haumai;
 is gathered up in the True One;
 meditates on the way of (true) Yoga;
 finds the door of salvation;
 acquires an understanding of the three worlds;
 and gains eternal peace.

Bhariāi mati pāpā kai saṅgi;
 Ohu dhopai nāvai kai raṅgi.
 Punī pāpī ākhaṇu nāhi;
 Kari kari karapā likhi lai jāhu.
 Āpe bīji āpe hī khāhu;
 Nānaka hukamī avahu jāhu. ²

If the mind be defiled by sin it is cleansed
 with love of the Nām. Virtue and sin are not
 mere words. We carry with us the influence of
 what we have done. As you have sown so you will
 reap, and in accordance with the Hukam you will
 transmigrate.

The divine Hukam expressed, as we have already observed,
 in the law of karam ensures that one must reap in accordance with
 what one sows. In order to banish the influence of committed sin
 the individual must sow that seed which bears not the baneful fruit
 of transmigration, but the blessed fruit of union. This seed (or,

¹Siddh Gostī (32), p.941. Cf also paurī (33).

²Japjī (20), p.4.

as here, this cleansing agent) is love of the Nām. Sāhib Singh comments on the Japji paurī:

As a result of the influence of māyā man falls into evil and his mind is sullied. This impurity separates man from the wholly pure God and the soul undergoes suffering. Nām simarānā alone is the means whereby the man can be instantly cleansed. And so the practice of simarānā is the means of cleansing the man from evil and uniting it with God.¹

Vir Singh has a similar comment:

The Satgurū has here informed us that the means of restoring purity to the mind or intellect clogged with sin is love of the Nām God is supremely holy. Remembrance of His Nām brings the man into a condition of meditation on Him. In this way the antahakaran, coming into contact by means of the Nām with the Possessor of the Nām, is purified through His holiness. Through Nām-simarān it is separated from other impure inclinations. Thus it is drawn progressively nearer to both the Hukam and its Giver, and thus haumai is gradually purged.²

But how does one "love the Nām"? What is meant in Gur^u Nānak's sādhana by Nām japnā or Nām simarānā?

Nām has already been dealt with. The Nām is the revelation of God's being, the sum total of all His attributes, the aggregate of all that may be affirmed concerning Him. Neither japnā nor simarānā can be satisfactorily translated into English, at least not

¹Sāhib Singh, Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib Darapan, vol. i, p.87.

²Vir Singh, Santhyā, vol. i, p.101.

in the context of Gurū Nānak's usage. Japnā means 'to repeat' and is used in connection with the recital of a divine name or a mantar. In many contexts this literal translation is entirely appropriate, for mechanical repetition of this kind, often with the help of a rosary, was a very common practice. It was not, however, Gurū Nānak's practice.¹ Some references might indeed suggest this, as for example the following lines from Japjī:

Ikadū jībhau lakha hohi lakha hovahi lakha vīsa;
 Lakhu lakhu gerā ākhīahi eku nāmu Jagadīsa.
 Etu rahi pati pavāriā charīai hoi ikīsa.²

Let every tongue become a lakh of tongues and every lakh become twenty lakhs. And then let every tongue utter God's Nam a lakh of times. This path is a staircase which leads to the Lord and having ascended it one passes into union with Him.

Such examples must, however, be read in the context of his general usage. Here it is a case of hyperbole, an effort to convey the immensity of the divine majesty and not a claim that the infinite repetition of a single name or syllable is an assured path to salvation. Gurū Nānak would without doubt have been in complete accord with the pronouncement of Gurū Amar Dās:

¹ Subsequent Sikh practice has not always accorded with Gurū Nānak's teaching. There has occasionally been a tendency to revert to the technique of mechanical repetition, sometimes under evident Haṭha-yoga influence. For an example see the exposition of Nām japnā given by Khazān Singh in his History and Philosophy of Sikhism, Vol. 2, pp. 420-1.

² Japjī (32), p.7.

Rāmu Rāmu karaṭā sabhu jagu phirai Rāmu nā
pāiā jāi.¹

Everyone goes around saying "Rām Rām", but
Rām is not found in this way.

Mere mechanical repetition is not enough, regardless of how devout
the repetition may be or how sophisticated a system may be built
around the practice.

Simarāṇā is more helpful, for "remembering the Nām" is
nearer to a description of Gurū Nānak's practice than "repeating
the Nām". It too, however, falls short of an adequate description.

How then is the practice to be described?

Sāchā Murāre tāmī jāpahi jāmi mani vasāvahe.²

Repeating (the Nām) of the True God means
engrafting (Him) in the man.

And the method whereby this engrafting is carried out is meditation
- meditation on the nature of God, on His qualities and His attri-
butes as revealed in the Śabad.

Rūrī bāṇī Hari pāiā Gura sabadī bīchāri.³

God is found through meditation on the Gurū's
Śabad the sublime bāṇī.

¹Bihāgarē kī Vār, ślok 1 of paūrī 18, p.555.

²Vaḍahansu Chhant 2 (5), p.567.

³Oaṅkāru (47), pp. 936-7.

Sabadu vīchāri bhau sāgaru tarai.¹

By meditating on the Sabad one crosses the Ocean.

Buḍi gharu ghālio Gura kai bhāi chalo;
 Sāchā namu dhīai pāvahi sukhi mahalo.
 Hari namu dhīae tā sukhu pāe peīarai dina chāre;
 Nija ghari jāi bahai sachu pāe anadinu nāli Piāre.²

You who are drowning (in the Ocean of Existence),
 you have laid waste your own dwelling. (Henceforth)
 walk in the Gurū's love. Meditating on the true
Nām you shall find bliss in the palace (of God).
 Meditate on the true Nām and you shall find
 bliss. Your stay in this world (lit: in your
 father's house³) is brief. When you go to your
 real home you shall discover the Truth and you shall
 dwell eternally with your Beloved.

Pūjā kīchai nāmu dhīāiai binu nāvai pūja na hoi.⁴

The worship (pūjā) which we should offer is
 meditation on the Nām for without the Nām
 there can be no (true) worship.

This meditation on the nature and qualities of God is the
 core of Gurū Nānak's religious discipline. The Sabad reveals the
 absoluteness of God. Meditate on this and make your submission before
 Him. The Sabad reveals the eternally stable permanence of God. Re-
 flect on this and abandon the fickle, fleeting world. The Sabad reveals

¹Prabhātī Aṣṭ 1 (1R), p.1342.

²Dhanāsarī Chhant 3 (2), p.689.

³The person addressed is the conventional figure of the bride.

⁴Gūjarī 1, p.489.

the absolute freedom of God from all that is māyā. Meditate on this and so separate yourself from its deceits. The Śabad reveals the ineffable greatness of God. Reflect on this and humble yourself before Him. It is a meditation which must overflow in words and deeds which accord with the nature of the Nām. It is remembrance of God "mani, bach, karami karakai"¹ -- in thought, word, and deed.²

This is the practical response which a believer is required to make. Meditate in love and you shall grow towards and into Him who is the object of your devotion and your meditation. It is a discipline which has been developed, interpreted, and expounded again and again, both by Gurū Nānak's successors and by devout Sikhs ever since. This should be remembered, for much of the detailed analysis which may be found in Sikh writings is taken from the works of the later Gurūs or represents assumptions based upon what is found in the scriptures. This is not to say that the assumptions are inconsistent with the basis, but merely that the basis as set out in Gurū Nānak's works is a relatively simple version of what the doctrine was later to become. Moreover, in the case of the Gurūs' followers

¹Pur JS, p.4.

²Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 6 (7), p.223; Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paūrī 16, p.471; Āsā Aṣṭ 15 (1R), p.419; Āsā Aṣṭ 22 (8), p.422; Gūjarī 1, p.489; Sūhī 1, p.728; Prabhātī 1, 2, and 3, pp. 1327-8.

the source of the Śabad and so the primary means of meditation has of course been the bāṇī recorded in the Ādi Granth.

This meditation must be individual and it must also be corporate. Gurū Nānak emphasised both.

Amrita velā sachu nāu vaḍiāi vīchāru.¹

At the ambrosial hour (of dawn) meditate on the greatness of the true Nām.

Sādha saṅgati mahi Hari rasu pāiai Guri miliai
jama bhau bhāga;
Nānaka Rāmanāmu japi guramukhi Hari pāe
masataki bhāga.²

In the company of the sants the joy of God's (presence) is obtained and when one finds the Gurū fear of death departs. This is your destiny that, repeating the Nām of God in accordance with the Gurū's instruction, you find God.

The satsaṅg as a vehicle of enlightenment does not receive the weight of emphasis which is to be found in Kabīr, but it is by no means ignored.

Lakha siāṇapa je karī lakha siu prīti milāpu;
Binu saṅgati sādha na dhrāpiā binu nāvai dukha
santapu.³

¹Japjī (4), p.2. This injunction has been accepted as an explicit commandment by the Khālṣā. Cf Sikh Rahit Marayādā, p.10. The same regulation lists the sections from the scriptures which should be recited by the individual in the morning and in the evening (pp. 10-11). Another section deals with attendance at the sādha saṅgat, or gurdvārā (pp. 14-17).

²Sorathī 10, p.598.

³Sirī Rāgu 17, p.20.

Even if one were to possess infinite wisdom and were to dwell in love and concord with an immense number of people, without the society of the holy there would be no satisfaction and without the Nām there would be misery.

Ghaṭi ghaṭi gupatu upāe vekhai paragaṭu guramukhi
santa jana.¹

He who having created (the universe) watches over it dwells hidden in every heart, (yet not beyond perceiving for) by the Guru's guidance He is revealed in the sants.

The traditional figure of the sandal tree is also used.

Chandana bhagatā joti inehī sarabe paramalu karaṇā.²

Such is the nature of the bhagat that like the sandal he imparts his fragrance to all (around him).

The activity of the bhagat in the satsaṅg is the singing of praises rather than meditation, but Nām jappā covers both, for both are concerned with God and with the individual's approach to Him. Music has always been used. Mardānā the Bard was Gurū Nānak's companion in many of his travels and in the janam-sākhīs there are references to Gurū Nānak's practice of kīrtan.³ The discipline must also be practised daily.

¹ Basant Hingol 12, p.1172. Cf also: Āsā Aṣṭ 22 (3), p.422; Vār Āsā, paūrī 9, p.468; Ramakalī Aṣṭ 5 (7), p.905; Mārū Aṣṭ 8 (12), p.1014; Prabhatī 17, p.1332; Surplus śloks (10), p.1411.

² Tilāṅg 2, p.721.

³ E.g. Pur JS, sākhīs 9 and 39, pp. 14 and 72. Cf also Bhāī Gurdās's Var 1, paūrī 38:

Phiri Bābā aiā Karatārapuri bhekhu udāsī sagala utārā.....
Sodarū āratī gāvīai amrita vele jāpu uchārā.

See supra p. 185.

Dukha mahurā mārāṇa Harināmu;
 Silā santokha pīṣaṇu hathi dānu.
 Nita nita lehu na chhījai deha;
 Anta kāli Jamu mārāi theha.
 Aisā dārū khāhi gavāra;
 Jitu khādhai tere jāhi vikāra.¹

Pain is poison, but God's Nām is the
 antidote. Let patient contentment be
 the stone on which you pound it and let
 your hand be that of charity. (If you)
 take it daily your body shall not fade
 away and at the end Death will be struck
 down. Take this medicine, for the consuming
 of it will purge the evil that is in you.

Meditation on the Nām and the singing of praises must have
 seemed easy to many, but Gurū Nānak declares them to be otherwise.
 They are difficult and few are prepared to make the sacrifices which
 they demand. Those who do accept the discipline, however, find that
 the reward far outweighs the sacrifice.

Ākhā jīvā visarai mari jāu;
 Ākhaṇi aukhā sākā nāu;
 Sāche nāma kī lāgai bhukha;
 Utu bhukhai khāi chaliāhi dukha.²

If I repeat the Nām I live; if I forget
 it I die. Repeating the Nām of the True
 One is hard, but if one hungers for it and
 partakes of it all sadness goes.

This, then is the discipline. The human body is a field in
 which the seed of Nām is to be sown. Cultivate it with love, humility

¹Malār 8, pp. 1256-7.

²Āsā 3, p.9, and Āsā 2, p.349.

fear of God, true living, purity, and patience and thus you shall reap your reward.

Manu hālī kirasāñī karañī saramu pañī tanu khetu.
 Nāmu bīju santokhu suhagā rakhu garibī vesu.
 Bhāu karama kari jamasī se ghara bhāgaṭha dekhu.¹

Regard your body as a field, your man the plough, your actions the ploughing, and effort the irrigation. (In the field) sow the Nām as seed, level it with the contentment (which is the result of levelling both pain and pleasure, of transcending them) and fence it with humility. Let your actions be those of love. (The seed) will then sprout and you will see your home prosper.

Bhau bhui pavitu pañī satu santokhu baleda;
 Halu halemī hālī chitu chetā vatra vakhata sañjogu;
 Nāu bīju bakhasīsa bohala dunīā sagala daroga;²
 Nānaka Nadarī karamu hoi jāvahi sagala vijoga.

Love is the soil, holiness the water, and truth and contentment the two buffaloes.
 Humility is the plough, the mind the ploughman, remembrance (of the Nām) the watering, and union (with God) the seed-time.
 The Nām is the seed and grace the crop.
 (These constitute Truth whereas) the world is wholly false.
 Nānak, if the Merciful One is gracious all separation (from Him) comes to an end.

4. The Concomitant Results

The practice of Nām simaranā results in experiences which develop progressively as meditation draws the individual nearer and

¹Sorāṭhi 2, p.595.

²Vār Rāmakalī, ślok 2 of paurī 17, p.955.

nearer to God, and which find their ultimate perfection in the final absorption of the man into Him. They are both results of the discipline and necessary aids to it, for they reveal more and more of the Nām and render the individual capable of rising to progressively greater heights.

The experience of visamād is, in this way, both a result of Nām japnā and a stimulus to more exalted meditation. Visamād may mean either an immense awe, a prodigious wonder engendered by the overwhelming, indescribable greatness of God; or it may mean the ecstasy resulting from the awe-inspiring vision of the greatness of God. The most sustained expression of visamād in Gurū Nānak's works is the lengthy ślok "Visamādu nāda visamādu veda" from Āsā dī Vār, in which almost every second word is 'visamād'.¹ The twenty-fourth paurī of Japjī is also an expression of this same awe.

Antu na sifati kahai na antu;
 Antu na karapai deni na antu;
 Antu na vekhai supai na antu;
 Antu na japai kiā mani mantu;
 Antu na japai kitā ākārū;
 Antu na japai parāvarū;
 Anta kārpi kete bilalāhi;
 Tā ke anta na pae jāhi.
 Ehu antu na japai koi;
 Bahutā kahīai bahutā hoi.
 Vaḍā Sahibu ūchā thau!
 Ūche upari ūchā nāu!
 Evaḍu ūchā hovai koi,
 Tisu ūche kau jānai soi.
 Jevaḍu āpi japai āpi āpi,
 Nānaka Nadarī karamī dāti!²

¹Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paurī 3, pp. 463-4.

²Japjī (24), p.5. Cf also: Āsā Aṣṭ 9 (6), p.416.

Infinite are the praises (of the Creator) and infinite the ways of uttering them. Infinite are His works and infinite His gifts. Infinite His sight; infinite his hearing; Infinite the workings of the divine mind. His creation seems infinite, its bounds infinite. Many have striven to encompass its infinity and none have succeeded. No one knows its extent and no matter how much one says much more remains to be said. Great is God and high His station, higher than high His Nām. Only he who is of equal height can comprehend its loftiness. God alone comprehends His own greatness. Nanak, all that we receive is by God's grace.

This is visamād, for Gurū Nānak both the inevitable result of true meditation and the food for even more refined and intense meditation.

The purging of haumai and its related impulses is likewise both a result and an essential aid. The further a bhagat proceeds in meditation on the Nām the less inclined he is to submit to his own haumai; and the less he submits to his own haumai the further he progresses towards the goal of ultimate union. The process is described, as in Kabīr,¹ in terms of dying to Self. Two kinds of death have already been noted in the thought of Gurū Nānak² and this is a third.

¹Cf Kabīr Sorāṭhi 6, p.655; Slok 29, pp. 555 & 1365-6 (= KG dohā 41.5); Slok 33, pp. 948 and 1366 (= KG dohā 41.9); Slok 183, p.1374; KG dohas 1.26 and 41.4.

²Physical death which comes to all and Death (personified in Yam) which is the fate of the manmulch. See supra p. 556.

Satiguru milai su maraṇu dikhāe;
 Maraṇa rahaṇa rasu antari bhāe;
 Garabu nivāri gaganapuru pāe.
 Maraṇu likhāi ae nahī rahaṇa;
 Hari japi jāpi rahaṇu Hari saraṇa.
 Satiguru milai ta dubidhā bhāgai;
 Kamalu bigāsi manu Hariprabha lāgai;
 Jīvatu marai mahā rasu āgai.¹

When the Satguru meets us he reveals to us
 (a kind of) dying, a condition of death which
 in our hearts we long to remain in. Casting
 out the Self,² (for such is the nature of this
 death) we ascend to celestial heights.
 (Physical) death is our fate (for such is the
Hukam) and no one remains. Repeat God's (Nām
 and so) remain under His protection. When
 the Satguru meets us dubidhā takes flight.
 The lotus (of the heart) unfolds and the man
 is engrafted into God, the Lord. Dying while
 yet living we find revealed (Truth), the mahā
ras.

Disaṭi vikārī nahī bhau bhāu;
 Āpu mare tā pāe nāu.
 Sabadi marai phiri maraṇu na hoi;
 Binu mūe kiu purā hoi.³

Because my eyes are turned towards evil I have
 neither fear of God nor love for Him. If the
 Self is slain then the Nām is obtained. If one
 dies by means of the Ṣabad one does not die
 again. Without such a death how can one be
 perfected.

Sacha kī kātī sachu sabhu sārū,
 Ghārata tisu kīpara apāra;
 Sabade sāpa rakhāi lāi,
 Guṇa kī thekai vichi samāi;

¹Gaurī 9, p.153.

²Lit. pride. See supra p. 543.

³Gaurī 7, p.153.

Tisa dā kuṭhā hovai sekhu,
 Lohū labu nikathā vekhu;
 Hoi halālu lagai Haki jai,
 Nānaka dari dīdari samai.¹

Truth is a knife and the steel (with which it is made) is Truth. Beyond understanding is its founding. It is rubbed on the hone of the Śabad and placed in the sheath of Virtue. He who is stabbed with it, O sheikh, from him issues the blood of greed. He who is slain with it in the approved manner (halāl) goes to meet the True One, and at His door blends in His vision.

It is a death which is accomplished by the overthrow of the man, a death to Self which the bhagat dies while yet remaining physically alive. The man must remain, but not the self-willed man which finds its expression in evil. It must be a redirected man and this overthrow, this redirection, is effected through the bhagat's love for the Nām and meditation on it.

Manu māre jīvata mari jānu;
 Nānaka Nadarī nadari pachhānu.²

He who smites his man knows the death which takes place while life yet remains. Nānak, by grace he recognises the Giver of grace.

Labā lobha lahari nivāraṇa Hari nāma rāsi māna;
 Manu māri tuhī Nirāñjanā kahu nānaka sarana.³

¹Vār Rāmakalī, śloka 2 of paurī 19, p.956. Cf also: Vār Mājh, paurī 20, p.147; Gaurī 9, p.153; Asā Aṣṭ 4 (3), p.413; Dhanāsari 2, p.661; Dhanāsari 7, p.662 (see supra p.571); Mārū Solahā 20 (1), p.1040.

²Prabhātī Aṣṭ 3 (8), p.1343.

³Gūjarī Aṣṭ 5 (8), p.506.

Turn aside the flood of greed and avarice by
laying up the capital of Hari's Nām in your man.
Let this by Nānak's prayer: "Smite my man,
O Nirāñjan, for I have taken refuge in Thee."

Gura parasādi āpo chīnhai jīvatiā iva marīai.¹

By the Gurū's grace one perceives (the true nature
of) the Self and so dies even while remaining alive.

Guru sāgaro ratanāgaru titu ratana ghaṇere rāma;
Kari majano sapata sare mana niramala mere rāma.
Niramala jali nāe jā Prabha bhāe pañcha mile vichāre;
Kamu karodhu kapaṭu bikhiā taji sachu nāmu uridhāre.
Haumai lobha lahari laba thāke pae dīna Daiālā;
Nānaka Gura samāni tīrathu nahi koī sāche Gura
Gopālā.²

The Gurū is an ocean, a mine of jewels in which
are many precious stones. I bathe in the seven oceans
(the Gurū's teaching) and my man is purified. I
bathe in the pure waters when it is the Lord's will and
thus by meditation I acquire the five blessings.³ I
abandon lust, anger, deceit, and evil, and enshrine the
true Nām in my heart. The wave of haumai and covetous-
ness has spent itself; the Merciful One has been found.
Nānak, there is no tīrath like the Gurū, (nothing to
compare to) the true Guru-Gopāl.

The man is cleansed of haumai and purged of all evil passions.

Purified and disciplined it ceases to be man's enemy and is trans-
formed instead into his ally. No longer does it lead him into the

¹Ōaṅkaru (41), p.935.

²Āsā Chhant 2 (3), p.437.

³Truth, contentment, compassions, dharam, and patience.

entanglements of māyā; no longer does it earn him a disastrous karam. Instead it leads him further and further into that same Truth by which it was itself cleansed.

Sacha bhai rātā garabu nivārai;
 Eko jātā sabadu vīchārai.
 Sabadu vasai Sachu antari hīā;
 Tanu manū sītalū raṅgi raṅgiā.
 Kāmu krodhu bikhu agani nivāre;
 Nanaka Nadarī nadari piāre.¹

He who is steeped in fear of the True One casts out pride. Meditating on the Śabad he comes to a knowledge of God for if the Śabad dwells (within), the True One is also within. Body and soul are immersed in (His) love and (their passions) are cooled. Nānak, the consuming fires of lust and anger are extinguished through the grace of the beloved Giver of grace.

Increasingly the bhagat becomes like God until ultimately he attains to a perfect identity.

Rāti dinanti rahai raṅgi rātā,
 Tīni bhavana juga chāre jātā;
 Jini jātā so tisa hī jehā,
 Ati niramailu sījhasi dehā;
 Rahasī Rāmu ridai ika bhāi,
 Antari sabadu Sāchi livā lai.²

He who is immersed in His love day and night knows (Him who is immanent) in the three worlds and throughout all time. He becomes like Him whom he knows. He becomes wholly pure, his body is sanctified, and God dwells in his heart as a single love. Within him is the Śabad and he is blended in the True One.

¹ Siddh Gostī (47), p.943. Cf also: Gaurī 9, p.153; Āsā Aṣṭ 15 (5), p.419; Tilāṅg 4, p.722; Bilāvalu 4, p.796; Ramakalī Aṣṭ 3 (2-3), p.904; Mārū Aṣṭ 10 (8), p.1015; Prabhātī Aṣṭ 1 (6), p.1342.

² Qaṅkārū (10), p.931. Cf also: Qaṅkārū (44), p.936; Tukhārī Chhant Barah-mahā (7), p.1108.

5. The Ascent

With the ever-widening visamāḍ and the progressive subjugation of the man go a developing sense of joy and peace. It is a path leading onward and upward. The accent is strongly upon ascent to higher and yet higher levels of understanding and experience, an accent which is particularly evident in Gurū Nānak's famous figure of the five khandḥ.¹

The pattern which is set out in this figure is frequently said to represent a Sūfī contribution to the thought of Gurū Nānak, the theory being that its origin is to be found in the maqāmāt of the Sūfīs.² There is, however, no evidence to establish this and the parallel is not really a close one. A much closer one is to be found in the pattern of salvation enunciated in the Yoga-vāsistha.

In the first stage (prathamā bhūmikā) the enquirer has to increase his wisdom by study and association with saintly persons. The second stage is the stage of critical thinking (vicāraṇā); the third is that of the mental practice of disassociation from all passions, etc. (asaṅgabhāvanā); the fourth stage (vilāpanī) is that in which through a right understanding of the nature of truth the world-appearance shows itself to be false; the fifth stage is that in which the saint is in a state of pure knowledge and bliss (śuddha-saṁvit-mayā-nanda-rūpa). This stage is that of the jīvan-mukta, in which the saint may be said to be half-asleep and half-awake (ardha-supta-prabuddha). The sixth stage is that in which the saint is in a state of pure bliss; it is a

¹Japjī (34-37), pp. 7-8.

²Cf Surindar Singh Kohli, A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, p.367.

state which is more like that of deep, dreamless sleep (susupta-sadrśa-sthiti). The seventh stage is the last transcendental state (turyātīta), which cannot be experienced by any saint while he is living. Of these the first three stages are called the waking state (jāgrat), the fourth stage is called the dream state (svapna), the fifth stage is called the dreamless (susupta) state, the sixth stage is an unconscious state called the turya, and the seventh stage is called the turyātīta.¹

Sikh commentators understandably attach considerable importance to the figure of the five khands for it is clearly intended to represent the ascent of the man to its ultimate goal. There is, however, much that is obscure in Gurū Nānak's exposition and considerable differences of opinion are to be found in the commentaries. In the case of the third and fourth the very names of the khands are translated differently.

Dharam Khand, the first, is the clearest of the five.² Dharam represents here the law of cause and effect. This obviously applies in the physical universe and the person who has reached this stage perceives that it applies in a religious and moral sense also. God is just and in His court the true and the false stand identified.

Gīan Khand (or Jñān Khand) is the second stage.³ It evidently represents a marked widening of the individual's understanding, chiefly

¹ S. Dāsguptā, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p.264, being his summary of the seven stages set out in the Yoga-vāsistha, vi, 120.

² Japjī (34), p.7.

³ Japjī (35-36), p.7.

due to a developing appreciation of the manifold qualities of creation and of the significance of great figures who have preceded him. The precise significance is not stated, but to some commentators the point is that such an understanding promotes a weakening of the individual's self-centredness.¹ One characteristic which is explicitly stated is the resultant joy of such a state.

Giāna khaṇḍa mahi giānu parachanḍu;
Tithai nāda binoda koḍa anandu.²

Knowledge shines in the Realm of Knowledge.
In it there is joy of sound, sight, and deed.

Saram Khand, the third stage,³ is the least clear and provides the most marked differences in interpretation. There are three views concerning the meaning of the word saram. First there are those who claim it derives from the Sanskrit śrama and who accordingly interpret it as the Realm of Effort.⁴ Secondly, there are those who would derive it from the Sanskrit śarman and who interpret it as the Realm of Bliss.⁵ And thirdly, there are those who

¹E.g. Mr. Justice Harnām Singh, The Japji, p.141.

²Japjī (36), p.7.

³Japjī (36), pp. 7-8.

⁴Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.7, n.29, and The Japji (English translation), pp. 13 and 39 ('self-exertion'). Sāhib Singh, Darapan, Vol. 1, p.124. S. S. Kohli, A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, p.367. Mohan Singh,

favour the Persian śaram ('shame') and who interpret it as either the Realm of Humility or the Realm of Surrender.¹ The actual description does not provide an answer, but indicates rather that by this stage the nature of the religious experience involved is passing beyond the describable.

Tithai ghāṛaṭi ghāṛīai bahuta anūpu;
Tā kiā galā kathīā nā jāhi;
Je ko kahai pichhai pachhutāi.²

(cont.) Pañjābī Bhākḥā te Chhandābandī, p.218. The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs (UNESCO), p.49. Sri Gurū Granth Koś, p.243. Dr. Jodh Singh, Tika Japujī Sāhib, pp. 97-99, does not actually give a synonym for saram but his interpretation places him in this category. Dr. Sher Singh Gyani, Guramati Darāsan, p.328, who interprets this khand as the Realm of Creative Imagination would also appear to be in this category. Kanh Singh appears to favour it as he gives puruṣārath dī manzil as his first definition, but he also adds anand maṇḍal as an alternative definition (MK, p.126).

⁵Vir Singh, Santhyā, Vol. 1, p.167. Khushwant Singh, Jupji: the Sikh Prayer, p.22. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. 1, p.216. (His translation is 'happiness'. Trumpp, The Adi Granth, p.12, used the same word.) The fact that the fifth stage of the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha pattern was that of "pure knowledge and bliss" lends some support to this interpretation. (See supra p. 594.)

¹Harnām Singh, The Japji, p. 143 ('humility'). Gopal Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.11, ('surrender') although not in his earlier The Song of Nanak, p.11, where his translation is "the domain of Practice". This Persian interpretation is general in the older, less important commentaries such as those by Bābā Maṅgal Singh, Gurmukh Singh, and Sant Gulāb Singh.

²Japjī (36), pp. 7-8.

There (in that Realm) are fashioned creations
of surpassing wonder. None can describe them.
If anyone tries he will rue the effort.

The only hint comes in the couplet:

Tithai gharīai surati mati mani budhi;
Tithai gharīai surā siddhā kī sudhi.¹

There inner perception and reason are fashioned;
there the understanding of a divine hero or a
siddh is developed.

The third of the suggested derivations is an attractive
possibility, but the first seems the most likely. It harmonises
better with the above couplet and where Gurū Nānak uses saram
in another context the meaning clearly seems to be 'effort'.

Manu hālī kirasāpī karaṇī saramu pāpī tanu khetu.
Nāmu biju santokhu suhagā rakhu garībī vesu.
Bhāu karama kari jamasī se ghara bhagaṭha dekhu.²

The figure of the ploughman makes much better sense if saram is
translated as 'effort' and the idea of modesty or humility is covered
by garībī in the following line.

Karam Khand is the fourth stage³ and here there are two
principal interpretations. First there is the majority opinion which

¹Japjī (36), p.8.

²Sorathi 2, p.595. See supra p.587.

³Japjī (37), p.8.

takes karam to be the Persian word meaning 'grace' and which accordingly interprets the fourth stage as the Realm of Grace.¹ Secondly, there is a minority opinion represented by Macauliffe,² Tejā Singh,³ and Khushwant Singh.⁴ All three have regarded karam as the Sanskrit karma and have translated Karam Khand as the realm or domain of Action. The Persian school certainly has the weight of numbers to support it, but there is one serious objection to this theory. Grace does indeed occupy a position of primary importance in the thought of Gurū Nānak, but there is no indication in his bānī that the receipt of grace comes so late in the bhagat's ascent to union. On the contrary it extends over the whole process and if any stage is of particular significance with regard to grace it is the very beginning. The Sanskrit

¹Vir Singh, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.167. Kānh Singh, MK, p.227. Jodh Singh, op.cit., p.99. Sahib Singh, op.cit. Vol. 1, p.125. Sher Singh, op.cit., p.329. Harnām Singh, op.cit. p.144. Gopāl Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.11 (But not in The Song of Nanak, p.11 - '(spiritual) Action'). S. S. Kohli, op.cit., p.367. The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs, p.50. Sri Guru Granth Kos, p.352.

²Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.216. His translation is "the realm of action". Trumpp's translation was "the region of works" (op.cit.p.13).

³Tejā Singh, The Japjī, pp. 14, 40, and Śabadārath, p.7. n.* (amal dā darajā).

⁴Khushwant Singh, op.cit., p.22. Also Sir Jogendra Singh, Sikh Ceremonies, p.40.

interpretation, however, faces an equally difficult problem. If Saram Khand is to be regarded as the Realm of Effort and Karam Khand as the Realm of Action there is little difference between the two stages.

A third possibility is that karam is the Sanskrit word and that it retains the normal meaning of karma. In this context the sense could well be that it is in the fourth stage that the bhagat begins to reap the reward of a karam earned through the practice of Nām simarāṇā. This would accord with what we are told of the fourth stage, for the emphasis is upon fulfilment and one aspect of this fulfilment is that the bhagat is said to pass beyond error and transmigration.

Nā ohi marahi na ṭhāge jāhi,
Jina kai Rāmu vasai mana māhi.¹

They in whose mans Rām dwells neither
die nor are deceived.

Accordingly, an appropriate translation would appear to be the Realm of Fulfilment.

Sach Khand is the fifth and final stage.² This is the Realm of Truth, the truedwelling-place of the Formless One. Here the believer passes into a unity which can be described only in

¹Japji (37), p.8.

²Ibid. See supra p.471.

terms of infinity.

Tithai khaṇḍa maṇḍala varabhaṇḍa;
Je ko kathai ta anta na anta.¹

Realms, worlds, universes exist there.
Were anyone to number them of his numbering
there could be no end!

This is the ultimate climax of the search for Truth,
for it is here that there is perfect and absolute accord with
the divine Hukam.

Jiva jiva hukamu tivai tiva k̄ara.²

But it is a condition which can be known only in experience.

Nānaka kathanā karaṇā sara!³

6. The Ultimate

Sach Khand is the goal, the ultimate end and purpose of human existence, the final consummation of man's ascent to God. But how to describe it? Gurū Nānak's eschatological references bring out, three things. First, it is to be conceived in terms of a union of the individual man with the being of God, the supra-soul.⁴ Secondly, this union means an end for ever to the trans-

¹Japjī (37), p.8.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴See supra p. 537.

migratory process, with all its attendant suffering, and instead an eternal, changeless tranquillity.¹ And thirdly, the true nature of this union must ever elude description. It can be represented in no more than inadequate symbols and the broadest of generalisations. Its essential quality can be known only in the actual experience of union.

The characteristic word which Gurū Nānak uses to convey the nature of the ultimate experience is the common verb samāṇā or samāunā. It is also used in the sense of 'to fill' or 'to pervade' in the context of the divine immanence, but here its meaning is rather 'to merge' or 'to blend'. Sachi samāunā, sabadi samāunā, sahaji samāunā, and avigati samāunā are examples of the manner in which Gurū Nānak seeks to express the experience of union. It is a blending of the individual light/in the Light of God (jotiṁ joti samāunā),² a mingling of the individual drop in the ocean, a dissolution of the individual soul in the Paramātmā.

Nadari kare tā simariā jāi,
 Ātamā dravai rahai liva lai;
 Ātamā Paratamā eko karai,
 Antara kī dubidhā antari marai.³

¹Cf Gaurī 10, p.154; Āsā Aṣṭ 7 (4), p.414; Āsā Paṭṭī Likhī (29), p.434; Suhi Aṣṭ 2 (1), p.751; Suhi Chhant 5 (3), p.766; Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 2 (8), p.832; Maru Solahā 20 (4), p.1040; Sāraṅg 2, p.1197.

²Tukhāri Chhant 5 (3), p.1112.

³Dhanāsarī 4 (1), p.661.

If God shows favour one meditates on Him.
The ātma is dissolved and is absorbed (in
God). (The individual's) ātma becomes one with
the Paramatma and inner duality dies within.

It is the chautha pad, the absolute condition transcending the
three gunas; ¹ the turiā pad or turiā avasthā; ² the param pad; ³
the amarāpad; ⁴ the dasam duār of the Nāths; ⁵ and the Nāth con-
dition of sahaj. Of these terms much the most common is the last.

Saravara hansā chhoḍi na jāi;
Prema bhagati kari sahaji samai. ⁶

The swans (the bhagats) never leave the lake
(the Gurū). Through their adoring love they
pass into the state of sahaj.

¹Gurū Nānak's usage clearly relates to his nirgun concept of God
for the "fourth state" is contrasted with the three gunas (cf
supra p. 455), but for him this does not require an ultimate
denial of personality. Cf Gurū Amar Dās's Sirī Rāgu 44, p.30:

Trai guṇa māiā mohu hai guremukhi
chauthā pada pāi.

Cf also: Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 1 (7), p.686; Bilāvalu Thitī (18), p.840;
Siddh Goṣṭi (51), p.943; Mārū Solahā 18 (4), p.1038.

²Gaurī 12, p.154. Āsā 22, p.356.

³Siddh Goṣṭi (24), p.940. Mārū Solahā 20 (10), p.1041. Prabhātī
14, p.1331.

⁴Tilāṅg 1, p.725.

⁵Gaurī 4, p.152. Mārū Solahās 13 (1), p.1033; 16 (2), p.1036;
19 (4), p.1039; and 20 (2), p.1040.

⁶Dhanāsari Aṣṭ 1 (3), p.685. Cf also: Gaurī Aṣṭ 15 (2), p.227;
Sūhī Chhant 5 (2), p.766; Rāmakālī Aṣṭ 3, p.903-4; Sāraṅg Aṣṭ 1,
p. 1232.

It would be difficult to distinguish Gurū Nānak's sahaj from that of the Nāth yogīs for in both cases we have a word which must be beyond the understanding of all who have not experienced the condition which it describes.¹ Gurū Nānak was in emphatic disagreement with Haṭha-yoga as a sādhana,² but in both cases similar claims are made on behalf of the ultimate state called sahaj. For both it has a climactic content which unfolds in absolute equipoise and absolute tranquillity; and for both it is a condition existing beyond the round of transmigration. The Nāths did indeed seek, in their own terms, to express their experience with some precision, but the descriptions are negatives or logically insoluble paradoxes which can have no real meaning outside the mystical experience which generates them. Moreover, the most characteristic of all such expressions, the anahad śabad, is used by Gurū Nānak as one of the symbols expressing the condition as he experienced it.³

¹"Like the brahman of the Upaniṣads and Vedānta, and the nirvāṇa of the Mahayanists, the state of sahaja is indefinable; it cannot be known dialectically, it can only be apprehended through actual experience." M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p.268.

²Cf Siddh Gostī, pp. 938-46. Cf also: Āsā Chhant 2 (2), p.436; Sūhī 8, p.730; Rāmkalī 4 and 5, p.877; Rāmakalī Aṣṭs 2, 5, and 6, pp. 903 and 905-6; Mārū Solahā 22 (14), p.1043.

³Cf Sirī Rāgu 18, p.21; Āsā Chhant 2 (1), p.436.

We are faced with the ineffable and must be content with descriptions which impart only a fragment of understanding. The condition of union is, as we have already observed many times, one which transcends the cycle of birth and death:

Miliā hoi na vīchhuraī je miliā hoī;
 Āvagaṇṇu nivāriā hai Sāchā soī.¹

If one meets Him and is not separated from Him transmigration ceases, for He is the True One.

Nāmu dhiāvai tā sukhu pāvai guramati kālu na
 grāsai;
 Jamapu maraṇu kālu nahī chhoḍai viṇu nāvai
 santāpi.²

He who meditates on the Nām finds peace for because of the Guru's instruction Death cannot consume him. Without the Nām the cycle of birth and death does not leave us and we suffer accordingly.

It is a condition of supreme visamād:

Tā kā antu na jāṇai koī;
 Pure Gura te sojhī hoī;
 Nānaka Sāchi rate bisamādī bisama bhae guṇa gaidā.³

None can comprehend Thee, but understanding comes through the perfect Gurū. Nānak, merged in union with the True One we are intoxicated with wonder, and struck with this wonder we sing His praises.

¹Sūhī 4, p.729.

²Tukhārī Chhant 2 (3), p.1110.

³Wārū Solahā 15 (16), p.1036.

And it is a condition of peace, of consummate joy and perfect tranquillity, a condition transcending all human telling:

Kāiā mahalu mandaru gharu Hari kā tisu mahi
 rākhī joti apāra;
 Nānaka guramukhi mahali bulāiai Hari mele Melanahāra.¹

The body is the palace of God, His temple,
 His dwelling-place wherein He has shone light
 infinitely radiant. By the Gurū's word one
 is summoned within the palace and there one
 meets with God.

Beyond this is the unutterable.

¹Malār 5, p.1256.

APPENDIX 1

The Ādi Granth

In S.1660 (AD 1603) Gurū Arjan, the fifth Gurū, established a camp in a particularly pleasant part of Amritsar and ordered a tank to be dug. Upon completion it was named Rāmsar and beside this tank Gurū Arjan carried out the compilation of the Sikh scriptures. The contents were selected by the Gurū and dictated by him to his amanuensis Bhāī Gurdās.¹ The task was completed in the following year, S.1661 (AD 1604), and on the first day of the light half of the month of Bhādon, S.1661, the original copy was installed in Harimandar, Amritsar, with Bhāī Buddhā as the first granthī, or reader.² Shortly before his death in AD 1708 Gurū Gobind Singh, the tenth Gurū, declared that the line of personal Gurūs was at an end and that thenceforth the Scripture was to be the Gurū of the Sikhs. It is accordingly known as the Gurū Granth Sahib. The alternative title Ādi Granth is used in order to distinguish it from the Dasam Granth.³

¹At the end of some of the Vars there appear the words 'sudhu kiche' or simply 'sudhu'. These entries are believed to represent Gurū Arjan's mark of approval added after he had checked Bhāī Gurdās's recording of such Vars. Cf Var Sirī Rāgu, p.91; Var Majh, p.151; Var Gaurī, Mahalā 5, p.323; and Tejā Singh, Sabadārath, p.91, n.^o. For Bhāī Gurdās see supra p.

²MK, p.327.

³See infra p. 624.

Gurū Arjan's primary reason for compiling the scripture is said to have been the circulation of spurious compositions, notably those of Prithī Chand, Gurū Arjan's eldest brother, whose followers came to be called Mīnās.¹ These works purported to be by Gurū Nānak himself and according to this tradition Gurū Arjan's purpose was to prepare an authorised version of genuine works. In addition to a substantial quantity of his own verse he included compositions by his four predecessors; the verses of a number of bhagats, notably Kabīr, Nāmdev, and Ravidās (Raidās); works attributed to Sheikh Farīd and those of another Sūfī named Bhikhan; and the works of several contemporary bhatts, or bards. With the exception of Mardānā's three śloks² and the Vār of Sattā and Balvaṇḍ,³ the verses of the bhatts are all cast in the form of the savayya or panegyric.⁴

Kānh Singh lists the total number of each contributor's works as follows:⁵

¹Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. 3, p.55. For the Mīnās see supra pp. 98 ff.

²Vār Bihāgarā, p.553.

³Rāg Rāmakalī, pp. 566-8.

⁴AG, pp. 1389-1409.

⁵MK, p.327. The figure includes both śabads and śloks in each case. The order has been rearranged here. In the MK they are listed in alphabetical order.

The Gurūs:

Gurū Nānak	947
Gurū Aṅgad	63 ¹
Gurū Amar Dās	869
Gurū Rām Dās	638
Gurū Arjan	2312

The Bhagats:

Kabīr	534 ²
Nāmdēv	62
Ravidās	40
Trilochan	5
Dhannā	4
Beṇī	3
Jaidev	2
Sadhana	1
Saip	1
Paramānand	1
Pīpā	1
Rāmanand	1

¹Only śloks.

²The figure includes the individual paūrīs of Bāvan Akharī (45 paūrīs), Thintī (16), and Sat Var (8). The writer's own calculation makes the total 532. See supra p. 51, n.2.

Sundar	6 ¹
Sūr Dās	2 ²

The Sūfis:

Farīd	123 ³
Bhīkhan	2

The Bhaṭṭs:

Sattā and Balvaṇḍ	8 ⁴
The <u>savayyas</u>	123
Mardānā	3

¹One poem of six paurīs. The poem, which is in Rāg Rāmakalī (p.923-4) and which is entitled Sadu, describes the death of Guru Amar Dās. Sundar was the son of Anand, the grandson of Moharī, and so the great-grandson of Gurū Amar Dās. (Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.923, n.*.) He, Sūr Dās, and the Sūfī Bhīkhan were the only bhagats who were contemporary with Gurū Arjan.

²Sūr Dās is difficult to classify. The figure 2 represents (a) a single line which appears in Rāg Sārāṅg (see infra p.618); and (b) a pad, also in Rāg Sārāṅg (p.1253), which is headed: Sārāṅg Mahalā 5 Sūradas. The pad is probably a work by Sūr Dās which was polished or in some way altered by Gurū Arjan (Mahalā 5) before inclusion in the AG. This Sūr Dās is not to be confused with the follower of Vallabhachāryā who wrote the Sūr Sāgar. The Sūr Dās of the AG was a brāhmaṇ who was also called Madan Mohan and who for a time served under Akbar as governor of Sandilā. (MK, p.169.)

³Mainly śloks. See supra p.446, n.3.

⁴Their Vār in Rāg Rāmakalī has eight paurīs.

Subsequently 59 paḍs and 56 dohās by Gurū Tegh Bahādur, and a single dohā attributed to Gurū Gobind Singh were added.¹ According to Sikh tradition Gurū Arjan left several pages blank in order to accomodate the works of a martyr Gurū.² There are indeed blank pages in the Kartārpur volume,³ but as Kānh Singh points out they are not in the appropriate rāgs for the paḍs which the ninth Gurū subsequently wrote, and no blank pages were left for his śloks.⁴ The scripture ends with a Rāgamālā which does not accord with the Ādi Granth order of rāgs and is evidently apocryphal.⁵

The paḍs recorded in the Ādi Granth are grouped according to rāgs or metre. Within each rāg there is a secondary division into chaupadās, dupadās, aṣṭapadīs, chhants, etc; and then a tertiary division, the works of each Gurū being grouped together and recorded chronologically. After all of these come the vārs and lengthy works such as Sukhamanī, Oaṅkāru, and Siddh Goṣṭi, and finally at the very

¹The dohā appears in the AG as number 54 in the śloks of Gurū Tegh Bahādur (p.1429). Tradition regards number 53 as a message of encouragement sent by Gurū Tegh Bahādur, while imprisoned in Delhi, to his son, and number 54 as Gurū Gobind Singh's reply. The Bhaī Banno version (see infra p. 621) explicitly designates it Mahālā 10. (Tejā Singh, op.cit. p.1429, n.*. IO Library Ms Panj. Fl, folio 705a.)

²John Clark Archer, art. The Bible of the Sikhs in The Review of Religion, January, 1949, p.116.

³The volume which is believed to be the original copy of the AG dictated by Gurū Arjan to Bhaī Gurdas. See infra p.618.

⁴MK, p.327.

⁵Surindar Singh Kohli, A Critical Study of the Ādi Granth, pp. 105-8.

end of each rāg there are the works of the bhagats. The exceptions to this pattern are very rare.¹ The different Gurūs are distinguished not by their names, but by the designation Mahalā,² followed by the appropriate number (Mahalā 1 for Gurū Nānak, Mahalā 2 for Gurū Aṅgad, etc.). At the very beginning stands the Mūl Mantar, the basic credal statement, and Gurū Nānak's Japjī which devout Sikhs are expected to learn by heart and repeat every morning.

The sources used by Gurū Arjan

Gurū Arjan's principal source is said to have been a collection which had been made by one Sahansrām at the instance of his grandfather, Gurū Amar Dās. This collection, which consisted of two pothīs or volumes, included the works of the first three Gurūs and of the bhagats,³ and so provided a substantial nucleus. The two pothīs were at that time in the possession of Mohan, the father of Sahansrām and elder son of Gurū Amar Dās.⁴ Bābā Mohan had not approved of his father's choice of

¹ Examples of exceptions are Gurū Rām Dās's Āsā 2 on p.348 and Gurū Amar Dās's Basant 4 on p.1169. Sundar's Sadu is also in an unexpected place. (See supra p.610 n.1.)

² The etymology is uncertain. See Srī Gurū Granth Kos, p.995. Kānh Singh (MK, p.327) mentions an old copy of the AG in Bābā Ajāpāl Singh Gurdwārā, Nabha, which has Pātasāhī instead of Mahalā.

³ MK, Addendum, p.44 (n.1 of p.327). See also MK, p.320, Goindavāl (1) and (5).

⁴ And so the maternal uncle of Gurū Arjan.

Gurū Rām Dās as a successor and it appears that Gurū Arjan had some difficulty in persuading him to part with the collection. Evidently Gurū Arjan went in person to Goindvāl¹ to secure the pothīs. There he stood in the street below the upper storey where Mohan resided and, so the tradition runs, sang Gaurī Chhant 2.

Mohana tere ūche mandara mahala apārā;
Mohana tere sohani duāra jīu sant dharamasālā.²

Mohan, Thy sublime abode is a palace of infinite proportions. Mohan, beautiful is Thy door, a resting-place for the sants.

Mohan, the tradition continues, was touched by the compliment and agreed to give the pothīs on loan. They were carried with great reverence to Amritsar in a palanquin³ and subsequently returned in the same way. The tradition is obviously open to doubt as far as the singing of Gaurī Chhant 2 is concerned, but this does not affect its substance. There would appear to be no evident reason to doubt that Gurū Arjan did, in some way or other, gain access to the two Goindvāl pothīs and use them as basis for his own collection.⁴

¹A small town in Tarn Tāran tahsīl, Amritsar District.

²AG p.248. There can, however, be no doubt that it is God who is being addressed. Vir Singh paraphrases Mohan as: He jīvan nūn moh lain vāle (sohane Vahigurū). (Santhya, Vol. 4, p.1583.) Cf also Sahib Singh, Darapan, Vol. 2, p.495. Vir Singh does, however, affirm the tradition that the śabad was sung on the occasion of Gurū Arjan's visit to Bābā Mohan (op.cit., p.1586).

³There is a palanquin in Gurdwārā Havelī Sāhib, Goindvāl, which is said to be the one used on these two occasions. (MK, p.320).

⁴MK, p.320, and Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.248, n.*. Both pothīs are said to be still extant. The first is in village Ahiāpur, District

To this nucleus were added works of the fourth Gurū, Rām Dās, and of Gurū Arjan himself. According to tradition it was also augmented by additional bhagat banī (the works of bhagats), gathered by inviting the followers of famous bhagats to visit the Gurū in his camp and submit suitable works for inclusion in the collection. Those which accorded with the teachings of the Gurūs, or which at least did not conflict with them, were duly approved.¹

(cont.) Hoshiārpur (MK, p.320, and Tejā Singh/Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, Vol. 1, p.30, n.1). The location of the second is variously reported to be Goindval and Paṭiālā. Vīr Singh (op.cit., p.1586) has described how in 1943 it was stolen from Goindval and disappeared. Subsequently he heard reports to the effect that it was in Mardān, District Peshāwar, and that during the 1947 disturbances it had been taken from there to Paṭiālā. Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh recently informed the writer that this is its present location. The MK Addendum, however, claims that it has been returned to its original location in Baba Mohan's Chaubara in Goindval and that it is publicly displayed every pūranmāsī. The author of the Addendum describes this second pothī as follows:

"Its text begins at Rāmakalī and then comes Sorāṭhī, Malār, and Sāraṅg rāgs. There are many divergences from the text of the Gurū Granth Sāhib. In it there are also śabads of Kabir and Namdev. There are many śabads in it which are not in the Gurū Granth Sāhib. The invocation for every rāg and banī is as follows:

'1 om satigurū parasāda sachunāmu
karatāru akāla mūrati ajūnī sambhau
gurū pure ke parasādu.'

(MK, Addendum, p.43.)

Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh has also informed the writer that the pothīs contain the banī of all the bhagats up to the time of their compilation, and that Dr. Jodh Singh possesses a note written by the late Baba Prem Singh of Hotī which gives details of the contents of the pothīs.

¹ Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. III, pp.60-61.

The tradition may be true as far as some of the bhagat bānī is concerned,¹ but it is unlikely that much of it could have been selected in this way. Practically all of the bhagats whose works appear in the Ādi Granth lived before the time of Gurū Amar Dās and the pothis compiled by Sahansrām included works by all of these bhagats. It seems clear that the bulk of such works must have been collected during the time of Gurū Amar Dās, and Dr. Mohan Singh may well be correct in according the credit for the actual collecting directly to the Gurū himself.²

The Language of the Ādi Granth.

The language of the Ādi Granth is reputedly a forbidding mixture of many different dialects, an almost insuperable barrier to a thorough understanding of the scripture. Macauliffe has described the problem as it appeared to him.

Judaism has its Old Testament; Islam its Quran; Hinduism its Veds, Purans, and Shastars; Budhism (sic) its Tripitaka; the Parsi religion its Zend-avesta; and Confucianism its Analects, its Spring and Autumn (sic), its Ancient Poems and

¹It may well be correct as far as the works of the later bhagats (Bhīkha, Sūr Dās, and Sundar) were concerned, but their total contribution amounts to only five padas. It is safe to assume that the savayyas of the bhatts were selected by Gurū Arjan after hearing them direct from their composers.

²Mohan Singh, A History of Pañjābī Literature, p.26.

its Book of Changes. The languages in which the holy writings of these religions are enshrined, though all difficult, are for the most part homogeneous, and after preliminary study with tutors can generally be mastered by the aid of grammars and dictionaries; but not so the medieval Indian dialects in which the sacred writings of the Sikh Gurus and Saints were composed. Hymns are found in Persian, mediaeval Prakrit, Hindi, Marathi, old Panjabi, Multani, and several local dialects. In several hymns the Sanskrit and Arabic vocabularies are freely drawn upon A man who is a good Sanskrit scholar will not know Persian and Arabic, and he who knows Persian and Arabic will not know words of Sanskrit derivation. A man who knows Hindi will not know Marathi; a man who knows Marathi will not know Panjabi and Multani, and so on. Moreover, there are words in the Sikh sacred writings which are peculiar to them, and cannot be traced to any known language. As to these one must accept the traditional interpretations. The Granth Sahib thus becomes probably the most difficult work, sacred or profane, that exists, and hence the general ignorance of its contents.¹

The difficulties which Mr. Macauliffe must have encountered as a pioneer sixty years ago make his judgment entirely understandable and it is certainly true that there is diversity in the language of the Ādi Granth. In practice, however, the heterogeneous nature of the Ādi Granth language presents relatively few problems once the Gurmukhī script has been mastered, for the different elements are for the most part closely related. There are certainly words from such diverse languages as Sindhī, Arabic, Persian, and Marāṭhī, but with very rare exceptions these provide no more than vocabulary problems.

¹ Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol. i, pp. v, vi.

They do not affect the essentially homogeneous structure of the Ādi Granth language.¹ A knowledge of Hindī and Pañjābī is the basic requirement. With this equipment one can proceed with relative ease to a study of Sādhukkarī or sant bhāṣā, the medium employed all over North India by the bhagats of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.² These three languages, all closely related, are the key to practically the whole of the Ādi Granth.

Within this general pattern the different Gurūs and bhagats made different linguistic emphases. Gurū Nānak's language normally has a strong Pañjābī colouring,³ although in a few cases he drew heavily from the vocabulary of a different language.⁴ Gurū Aṅgad and Gurū Rām Dās, the second and fourth Gurūs, are also predominantly Pañjābī. Gurū Amar Dās, however, shows more signs of Hindī influence and in the case of Gurū Arjan the Hindī emphasis is pronounced.

The three versions

There are three early bīrs⁵ of the Ādi Granth. Others exist, but they diverge little from the three early versions.

¹Cf Mohan Singh, Pañjābī Bhākhā te Chhandābandī, pp. 6-7.

²R. C. Śukla, Hindī-Sāhitya kā Itihās, p.17.

³H. P. Dvivedī, Hindī Sāhitya kī Bhūmikā, p.98.

⁴E.g. in Tilāṅg 1, p.721, which, while still possessing the same structure as his other compositions, has a high proportion of Persian words. Evidently it was intended for Muslim ears.

⁵A collection of different works bound in a single volume.

1. The Bhāī Gurdās or Kartārpur version

The first of the three versions is a bīr which is still in the possession of the Soḡhī family of Kartārpur¹ and which is reputed to be the original copy dictated to Bhāī Gurdās by Gurū Arjan. Tradition holds that the Mūl Mantar at the very beginning is in Gurū Arjan's own hand and that Gurū Hargobind's signature is to be found on folio 541.² A pad by Mīrā Bāī has been included but crossed out and a pad "Dekhahu logā" which follows Kabīr's Āsā 34 has suffered a similar fate. This latter pad was numbered 35, but was evidently deleted at once as the following pad also bears the number 35.³ A third extensive deletion occurs at the end of Rāg Sāraṅg. On page 1253 of the printed versions available today, and immediately preceding a pad by Sūr Dās, there appears the single line:

Chhādi mana Hari bimukhana ko saṅgu.

In the Bhāī Banno version this pad, which is also attributed to Sūr Dās, is recorded in full, but in the Kartārpur version all but this first line has been deleted.⁴ This version lacks, of course, the subsequent compositions of Gurū Tegh Bahādur and the ślok attributed

¹The town founded by Gurū Arjan in District Jullundur, not Gurū Nānak's foundation on the right bank of the Rāvī.

²MK, p.327.

³Ibid.

⁴Tejā Singh, Śabadārath, p.1253, n.12.

to Gurū Gobind Singh, but has the blank pages which have given rise to the tradition that Gurū Arjan deliberately made provision for the works of the ninth Gurū.¹ The whole volume contains 975 leaves.²

Gurū Arjan had the original copy installed in Harimandar, Amritsar, but his successor, Gurū Hargobind, kept it in his house at Kartarpur. From there it was stolen by his grandson Dhīr Mal who evidently intended that it should buttress his claims to the succession as Gurū.³ Some thirty years later followers of the ninth Gurū recovered it, but were instructed by the Gurū to return it. According to tradition he placed it in the Satlej River and informed Dhīr Mal, who recovered it unharmed.⁴ Dr. J. C. Archer, who was permitted to inspect the Kartarpur volume, comments: "The stains that mar it seem not to be the signs of water-damage."⁵ This is not to suggest that the tradition must necessarily be wholly

¹See supra p.611.

²Archer says 974. (The Bible of the Sikhs, p.116.)

³Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.213.

⁴C. H. Loehlin, The Sikhs and their Book, p.46. This tradition was related to Dr. Loehlin by the Kartarpur giānī. S. S. Kohli, A Critical Study of the Ādi Granth, p.18, mentions another tradition which holds that the third version, the Damadame Vālī Bīr compiled by Gurū Gobind Singh, was hidden in the Satlej in S.1758 (AD 1701) to protect it from enemies.

⁵J. C. Archer, op.cit., p.115.

untrue, for it is conceivable that Gurū Tegh Bahādur, for some reason, had it hidden near the Satlej. We have, however, entered by this stage a period of almost total obscurity as far as this first version is concerned. Gurū Gobind Singh is said to have asked for it and been refused by Dhīr Mal. Some assume that it has remained ever since with Dhīr Mal's family, the Kartārpur Soḡhīs,¹ but there have been traditions which would indicate that this is not necessarily a safe assumption.²

Dr. C. H. Loehlin, who has also been permitted to examine the volume at Kartārpur, has described his visit as follows:

On presenting myself at the Shish Mahal at Kartarpur, I was told by the officer of wards that I might handle the book myself provided I washed my hands first - needless to say we had taken off our shoes before entering the Gurudwara. In view of possible future repercussions, however, I preferred to have the official giani handle the book. It was wrapped in several layers of silk cloth and usually kept in a glass case when not in use. The volume has of course been rebound; and the original sheets of yellowish and much worn paper have been mounted on newer sheets to preserve the original. The pages were about 9" x 12", and quite legibly written in black ink. The volume was, of course, quite bulky. The tradition of the officially signed volume we have noted above as mentioned by Trumpp, Khazan Singh, and Macauliffe; and it is quite common among even well educated Sikhs today. This was the special point I wished to verify, so I asked the Giani

¹S. S. Kohlī, op.cit., p.16. Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, p.305.

²C. H. Loehlin, op.cit., p.46.

to show me Guru Arjan's signature. In response he showed me the first page of the book, on which the opening verse of the Granth, "Ikk Om Sat Nam, etc." was written in a scrawly hand, much as if it might have been done by one unaccustomed to writing, or by a schoolboy. I was told by the giani that this opening mantra had been written by the Guru himself; which was probable enough; but there was no signature nor seal of any kind, either there, nor at the end of the volume, nor anywhere else. We were shown several blank pages, on which Guru Arjan had prophesied that a martyr Guru would later furnish hymns; and some hymns of the Ninth Guru Teg Bahadur have accordingly been included in the present edition of the Granth. As the giani turned the pages for me, another significant feature came to light. In places the text had been blotted out by dark green ink of some kind. I remember one page where a line and a half had thus been obliterated; and there were one or two other such places, if my memory serves correctly. What a problem for the textual critic to discover what was under that obliterating mark! The giani's explanation was that the Guru himself had done this because of some mistake Gur Das had made. In view of the chequered history of the old book, and its long sojourn in the hands of the Gurus' enemies, which will be noted later, it is equally possible that some of them might thus have gotten rid of something objectionable.¹

2. The Bhāī Banno version

A very old copy of the Ādi Granth was until 1947 to be found in the village of Maṅgaṭ, District Gujrat (now in Pakistān).² Two

¹C. H. Loehlin, op.cit., pp.44-45. Inspection of the volume is no longer permitted.

²Dr. Gaṇḍā Singh has informed the writer that this bīr was brought over to India and is now in the possession of Avtar Singh Rāgī, son of Jwālā Singh Rāgī of Gurdwārā Mātā Sundarī, near Irwin Hospital, New Delhi. The IO Library Ms Panj. Fl is a copy of the Bhāī Banno version.

traditions exist concerning the production of this volume. According to one, Bhāī Banno, a resident of Maṅgaṭ, visited Gurū Arjan and having developed a great interest in the new scripture asked permission to take it back to Maṅgaṭ on loan. Gurū Arjan was understandably loath to accede to the request, but eventually gave permission on condition that Bhāī Banno kept it at his village for one night only. Bhāī Banno circumvented this condition by travelling very slowly to and from Maṅgaṭ. The lengthy journey afforded him time to make a copy of the volume without breaking his promise.¹ The other tradition holds that he was entrusted with the responsibility of taking the original to Lahore for binding and that he made his copy while on this mission.²

The Bhāī Banno version contains all that is in the Kartārpur version, together with some additions. Two of the more important of these are not really additions, but rather reproductions of what was inscribed in the original and then deleted:

- a) The pad by Mīrā Bāī in Rāg Mārū.
- b) The pad by Sūr Dās of which only the initial line has been left in the Kartārpur version.³

¹Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol. III, p.66.

²MK, p.327.

³See supra p. 618.

The extra material also includes the work entitled Hakikat Rāh Mukām Śivanābh Rāje kī.¹ The remainder consists of additional śabads and śloks which are listed by Kāñh Singh.² A number of copies have been made from this bīr, some of which contain even more additional material. Kāñh Singh's note refers to one in Nābhā which includes an extra pad attributed to Trilochan, and one in Rāwalpiñḍī which has an extra pad attributed to Nādev.

3. Damadamā version

There is a tradition that when Gurū Gobind Singh asked Dhīr Mal for the Bhāī Gurdās version he was informed that if he was really the Gurū he should prepare his own copy.³ This he is said to have done while resting in the village of Sābo kī Talavañḍī, 18 miles south of Bhaṭindā, after the Battle of Muktsar in the summer of AD 1705. The location was subsequently named Damadamā ("resting-place") in commemoration of the Gurū's having rested there. Tradition holds that he dictated the entire contents from memory to Bhāī Manī Singh,⁴ and that he added to the original version the pads and

¹See Appx 3, p. 629 ff.

²MK, p.327.

³S. S. Kohli, op.cit., p.17.

⁴MK, pp. 327, 465.

dohās by his father, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, and the dohā which has been regarded as his own.¹ It is this enlarged version which is now almost invariably used. The original was lost during the pillage of Amritsar by Ahmad Shāh Durrānī's Afghans, following his victory over the Sikhs in AD 1762 (the Vaḍḍā Ghalūghārā, or Great Holocaust).² Prior to this, however, many copies had been made.³ The Damadāmā version should not be confused with the Dasam Granth, which has generally been regarded as a collection of the works of Gurū Gobind Singh and which was compiled in an obscure manner twenty-six years after his death.⁴

Many printed editions of the Ādi Granth are available today, but the Sikhs still await an Authorized Version. For more than ten years now unsuccessful efforts have been made to have an edition printed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.⁵ Blocks were prepared for printing in 1953, but the actual printing was

¹Gurbakhsh Singh reported having discovered in Dacca a copy of the Ādi Granth dated S.1732 (AD 1675) which includes the works of Gurū Tegh Bahādur arranged in their correct order. (Dacca Review, Vol. 5, Nos. 11 and 12, February and March, 1916, pp. 375-378). See Appendix 3, p. 637.

²Tejā Singh and Ganḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, Vol. 1, p.169, quoting Gyan Singh's Panth Prakāś, 740.

³MK, p.327.

⁴C. H. Loehlin, The Sikhs and their Scriptures, pp. 35-6. Khushwant Singh, op.cit., pp. 313-7.

⁵The Committee responsible for the administration of most of the important Sikh gurdwaras in the Panjāb. An unofficial committee bearing

postponed when it was discovered that the committee responsible for publication had in a number of cases reversed the order of invocation and title of a rāg. The committee's claim that this was in accordance with the Kartārpur text was declared to be in error and on November 27th, 1959, the General Body of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee voted that the order should be in accordance with that of the Damadama version.¹ In November, 1962, representatives of the SGPC, of the Gurū Khālsā Sant Samāj, and of the Chief Khālsā Dīwān visited Damadama Sahib and consulted the Bābā Dīp Singh copy of the Damadama version in order to ensure that the correct text would be followed.² The controversy has, however, persisted and an Authorised Version has not yet been printed.

(cont.) this name was first set up in 1920 by Sikhs involved in the Akālī agitation for control of Sikh shrines. In 1925 the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of the Punjab Legislature vested administrative authority in an elected Central Board, and in the following year this Board assumed the name Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Later in the same year the unofficial committee accepted this change of name and was wound up. (MK, p.312. Khushwant Singh, The Sikhs, pp. 106, 115.)

¹ 'Khālsā Samachār', 28 February, 1963, p.2.

² Ibid.

APPENDIX 2

Manuscript copies of Bhāī Bālā janam-sākhī in London

1. India Office Library Ms Panj. B41, S2885.

This manuscript is clearly written and in good condition. The date of completion for the janam-sākhī proper is given as S.1831 mitī māgh sudī 13.¹ The janam-sākhī is followed by the Nasīhatnāma² and two metrical works entitled Make dī Goṣṭi ("The Mecca Discourse") and Goṣṭi Madine kī ("The Medina Discourse") respectively. At the very end of the manuscript the date of final completion is given as S.1832 mitī vaisākh sudī 4.³ Both dates fall within the year AD 1775. The copyist of both portions is named Thākur Dās Faqīr.

2. British Museum Or.2754.I

This manuscript is substantially the same as the India Office Library version. There are numerous variants, but almost all are minor differences of vocabulary or expression. The same Hindālī

¹ Loc.cit., folio 253b. The copyist has written S.1331, but altered it to S.1831.

² A lengthy poem spuriously attributed to Gurū Nānak. (MK, p.506).

³ Loc.cit., folio 395b.

⁴ Loc.cit.

references to Kabīr are included,¹ but an indecent story which appears at the end of the India Office Library version² has been omitted. It is not followed by the Nasīhatnāmā, Make dī Goṣṭi, and Goṣṭi Madine kī. The manuscript has been copied by various hands on inferior paper, but is generally clear. No date is given.

3. Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies,
manuscript no. 104975.

This manuscript is dated S.1912 (AD 1855). It was copied in Amritsar and the copyist's name is given as Mūl Singh.³ Most of the manuscript (folios 1-220) corresponds, on the whole, to the India Office Library and British Museum manuscripts, and includes the Hindālī references which occur in the discourse with Dhrū.⁴ Minor variants are numerous in all sākhīs and a number of sākhīs, notably those which concern the Bengal visit and the Triā rāj, have been omitted. The remainder of the manuscript (folios 220-304) diverges in order, length, and content. It is appreciably longer than the corresponding remainders of the other two manuscripts and

¹See supra p. 146-7.

²IO Library Ms Panj. B41, folio 251a-b, and E. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, p.lxxiv.

³Loc.cit., folio 304b.

⁴See supra p. 147, n.1.

its material differs radically. In a number of sākhīs there are evident signs of Purātan influence and, unlike the other two manuscripts, it gives in its concluding sākhī an account of Gurū Nanak's death.

APPENDIX 3

Hakikat Rāh Mukām Rāje Śivanābh kī

In many of the older manuscript copies of the Ādi Granth there is to be found a brief apocrypha consisting of several śloks and a pad, all attributed to Gurū Nānak, and a short prose passage entitled Hakikat Rāh Mukām Rāje Śivanābh kī.¹ The prose passage purports to be a description of how to travel to Rājā Śivanābh's kingdom in Ceylon. It was evidently first recorded in the Bhāī Banno version of the Ādi Granth² and it has generally been accepted as conclusive proof of the janam-sākhī tradition concerning Gurū Nānak's meeting with Śivanābh in Ceylon.³ The complete text

¹ Almost all of the Ms copies of the AG in the BM and the IO Library contain this apocrypha. It is to be found in the following:

BM Or.1125, Or.2159, and Add. 25,680
IO Library Panj. MSS C1, C5, D1, D2, D3, F1.

This extra material is included at the end of each volume. It follows the Mundavani and Gurū Arjan's concluding ślok, but precedes the Ragamālā with which all copies of the AG end.

² See Appendix 1, pp.621 ff. The IO Library Ms Panj. F1, which appears from other additional contents to be a copy of the Bhāī Banno version, also has the Hakikat Rāh at the end of the volume.

³ Cf Tejā Singh and Gaṇḍā Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.9 n1; I. Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, vol.i, p.83; Kartar Singh, Life of Guru Nanak Dev, p.176, n.+; A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c., vol.i, p.687, n.4.

is as follows:¹

Hakikat rāh mukām Rāje Sivanābh kī. Nāgapaṭaṇu Bidari Tijāvar saharagāh taha kā Rājā Airāpati Naiku hai. Taha valāit Rām Rāje kī hai taha te lok jahāji charatā hai. Tini din tini rāti vichi Jāpapaṭaṇu pāri kā bandaru hai. Taha jāi utarata hai so Siṅghalādīpu hai. Chaudah sai gau vichi vasada hai. Taha sat rāje se Gurū Bābe ke vachani iku rāju hoiā hai. Sivanābh rāje kī santati satāvadi sahari hai takhatagāh taha ab Rājā Maiādaunī hai. Rāje Rāi Siṅgh kā beṭa Rāje Sivanābh kā potā hai. Taha Gurū jī kī dharamasāl hai. Saṅgati jurāti hai kīratānu hotā hai. Rasoi bīs maṇ lūṇu haroj lagatā hai. Nekāpuṭaṇu Bijānagar te ikatīrī kos hai. Ghar Bhāṭarīa ke Begāpuru Bijāpuru te kos asī hai. Arogapeṭhi hai. Taha saṅgati Change Bhāṭare kī hai. Tis kī girad nivāhi Sikh saṅgati bahut hai. Ar Bhāṭarīa ke ghar te Kajalībanu kos asī hai. Tirīa rāju hai taha bhī Gurū Bābe kā dehurā hai. Saṅgati Bhāṭarīa ke jurāti hai. Uthe Gurū Sidhā nālī goṣaṭi kar kai puja khinchi lītī haisu. Tab Sidh Gurū kā joru ajamāi kai pairī ai pae haini. Us thāv kā nāu Kajalībanu triā rāju hai taha bhī saṅgati hai.

The truth (concerning) the way to Rājā Sivanābh's dwelling. Nāgapaṭaṇ (is in) Bidar Tijāvar (and) the governor of that place is Rājā Airāpati Naik. The sovereignty is that of Rāmārāja. At that place people board ship. In three days and three nights (one reaches) Jāpapaṭaṇ, a port on the other side. Proceeding there one disembarks and this is Siṅghalādīp. (The people there) live in fourteen hundred villages. At the command of Gurū Bābā (Nānak) seven kingdoms which were there became one kingdom. There are fifty-seven (?) cities under Rājā Sivanābh's authority. The throne of that place is now occupied by Rājā Maiādaunī. He is the son of Rājā Rāi Siṅgh and grandson of Rājā Sivanābh. There is a dharamsālā of the Gurū's there. A saṅgat meets and there is Kīrtan. Twenty maunds of salt are used in the kitchen every day. Nekāpaṭaṇ is seventy-one kos from Bijānagar. The home of the Bhāṭrās, Begāpur, is eighty kos from Bijāpur.

¹

In the MSS the individual words are not separated, except at the conclusion of sentences. The text which has been used is the one given in the BM Ms Or.1125, the copy of the Ādi Granth which was found by Henry Erskine in one of the Sikh tents following the Battle of Gujrat in 1948. The variants in the other manuscript copies in London are insignificant.

A hospital (?) is there. There is a Chāṅgā Bhāṭṭā saṅgat there. In the surrounding country there are many Sikh saṅgats. Kajalīban is eighty koṣ from the home of the Bhāṭṭas. It is ruled by women and there is a temple of the Gurū there also. A Bhāṭṭā saṅgat meets there. The Gurū held a discourse with Siddhs there and dissuaded them from idol-worship. Then the Siddhs, having tested the Gurū's power, fell at his feet. The name of that place is Kajalīban. It is ruled by women and there is a saṅgat there also.

If the tradition concerning the origin of the Bhāī Banno volume is correct the volume must have been copied between 1604 and 1606, the dates of the completion of the Ādi Granth and of Gurū Arjan's death respectively. We cannot be sure that the tradition is in fact authentic and nor, without seeing the original Bhāī Banno volume, can we ascertain that the Hakikat Rāh is not a subsequent addition. There is, however, nothing in the Hakikat Rāh itself to suggest that it was written later than 1606. On the contrary, the names which it gives, both for persons and for towns, suggest that it may well have been written in or before that year.

According to Santokh Singh the Hakikat Rāh came to be written in the following manner. Prior to the actual dictation and writing of the Ādi Granth Gurū Arjan spent some time gathering materials for inclusion in it. Gurū Nānak was believed to have left a work called the Prāṇ Saṅgalī in Ceylon and Gurū Arjan sent a certain Bhāī Paiṛā there in order to bring it to the Pañjāb. After his return Paiṛā related his travels and Bhāī Banno recorded the account in his volume under the title Hakikat Rāh Mukām Rāje Sivanābh kī.¹

¹ Suraj Prakāś, rāsi 3 ansū 32. In Vīr Singh's edition vol. vi, pp. 2038-44.

There appears to be little likelihood that this account is correct. The Purātan janam-sākhīs do include a work entitled the Prāṇ Saṅgalī which they describe as "an account of the Palace of the Void"¹ and which, they claim, was composed by the Gurū in Ceylon,² but it occurs in a confused section of their account which can have no claims to historical accuracy.³ If ever such a work did come to the notice of Gurū Arjan he must have rejected it as spurious, for it is inconceivable that he would have omitted it from the Ādi Granth had he seen it and been convinced of its authenticity.⁴

Rejection of Santokh Singh's explanation does not, however, enable us to dismiss the Hakikat Rāh itself in the same summary manner. There can be no doubt that a visit to South India lies behind it, for there is a degree of accuracy in place-names which is explicable only in the light of such a visit. On the other hand, there are also several inaccuracies and these are sufficiently serious to indicate that the writer did not himself make the journey. It seems that we have in this account a mixture of geographical accuracy (as far as some of the place-names are concerned), historical fact, historical

¹Sun, i.e. śūnya.

²Pur JS, p.89.

³See supra p. 374.

⁴The composition given in the Purātan JSs is certainly spurious. Its Haṭh-yoga emphasis is one which Gurū Nānak could never have made.

confusion, and legend. The elements of confusion and legend are the important ones for only if some of these are accepted as historically accurate can the account be used as evidence of a visit to Ceylon by Gurū Nānak.

The first significant error is the statement that Rājā Airāpati Nāik was the saharagāh, or governor, of Nāgapaṭaṇ (Nagapattinam) in Tanjore during the period of Rāmarāja's authority. This indicates the period from Rāmarāja's usurpation of power in Vijayanagar in 1542 until his death at the Battle of Talikota in 1565. The nāyakship of Tanjore was founded shortly before this, during the reign of Achyuta Raya (1530-41), and the first to occupy it was Sevappa Nāyak¹. In 1560 Sevappa Nāyak died and was succeeded by Achyutappa Nāyak². Neither of these names corresponds to Rājā Airāpati Nāik, and nor do those of their successors. Some years prior to his death Achyutappa Nāyak abdicated in favour of his son Raghunātha Nāyak³ and in 1633 Raghunātha Nāyak was succeeded by Viayarāghava Nāyak.⁴

¹H. Heras, The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara, p.173; V. Vriddhagirisan, The Nayaks of Tanjore, pp. 14-15, 24. Heras gives the date as 1541; Vriddhagirisan as c.1532.

²V. Vriddhagirisan, op.cit., pp. 34-35.

³Ibid., pp. 61, 65.

⁴Ibid., p.127.

Airāpati Naik is almost certainly the famous Ariyanātha Mudaliar who exercised authority not in Tanjore but in Madura. Ariyanātha was not himself the nāyak, but instead the general and coadjutor of four successive nāyaks.¹ He died in about 1600 after a period of authority covering more than half a century.²

The second significant error is the statement that in obedience to Gurū Nānak's command seven Sinhalese kingdoms became one. This is clearly a case of legend rather than of historical confusion. The most important event to occur in Ceylon during early decades of the sixteenth century was actually a division of the most important kingdom. In 1521 there was a revolution in the Kingdom of Kōṭṭē as a result of which there emerged a truncated Kōṭṭē and the two new kingdoms of Sītāvaka and Kandy.³

Thirdly, there is the statement that Rājā Maiādaunī was the occupant of the Jāpāpaṭaṇ (Jaffnā) throne. Māyādunne was certainly a king during this period, and an important one but he was not the

¹Viśvanātha Nāyak (c. 1529-64). Krishṇappa Nāyak I (1564-72). Virappa Nāyak (1572-95). Krishṇappa Nāyak II (1595-1601).

²R. Sathyanatha Aiyar and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, History of the Nayaks of Madura, pp.53, 62, 73-4, 84-6. "His whole life is enveloped in tradition which makes extravagant and bewildering claims to greatness on his behalf. His equestrian statue in Pudumandapam and the thousand-pillared hall are substantial relics of his importance." Loc.cit., p.62. The Telugu work Tanjāvuri Āndhra Rājula Charitra indicates that his tenure of office began before the foundation of the Tanjore nāyakship. S. Krishnaswami Ayyangar, Sources of Vijayanagar History, p.323.

³Fernao de Queyroz, The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon, p.204. Art. Ceylonese Chronology by D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe in the Epigraphia Zeylanica, vol.iii, pp.43-4.

ruler of Jaffnā. He was one of the conspirators in the Kōṭṭē uprising of 1521 and at its successful conclusion acquired the territory of Sītāvaka in the south-west of the island.¹

Fourthly, and this is the crucial mistake, Māyādunne was not the grandson of a rājā named Sivanābh, nor could he have been as he and his forbears were Buddhists. According to the University of Ceylon History of Ceylon,² Māyādunne was the son of Vijayabāhu VII of Kōṭṭē. In this respect the Hakikat Rah, which claims that he was the son of Rājā Rāi Siṅgh, is just as likely to be correct. In fact, both are correct for in accordance with common Sinhalese practice Vijayabāhu VII and his brother Rājasīṃha shared a common wife. One of the four sons of this polyandrous marriage was Māyādunne.³ The statement that he was the paternal grandson (potā) of Rājā Sivanābh is, however, incorrect. Vijayabāhu VII and Rājasīṃha were both the sons of Parākramabāhu VIII.⁴

These are the important inaccuracies and to them we may add two minor ones. First, the conjunction of Bidar and Tajāvar (Tanjore) indicates an element of confusion. The author, or perhaps the editor,

¹Gulavamsa, ii.224 n.1. Sītāvaka is the present Avisavella, about 26 miles east of Colombo.

²Dynastic chart facing p.851 of vol.i.

³Epigraphica Zeylanica, vol.iii, p.43.

⁴Ibid., p.41.

of the Gyān-ratanāvali, who evidently used the Hakikat Rāh, also refers to "Bidari-Tijāva".¹ Secondly, the figure given for the daily salt consumption in the dharmśālā is plainly impossible. This particular error appears to have been taken from the janam-sākhī traditions.²

One other point which should be noted as a possible inaccuracy is the series of references to groups of Bhāṭṭrā Sikhs in South India. The Bhāṭṭrās are a sub-caste of pedlars, notorious swindlers who claim brāhmaṇ origins. The members of the sub-caste who live in the Pañjāb claim to be Sikhs and trace their conversion back to Gurū Nānak's visit to Ceylon.

Mádho (the traditional founder of the sub-caste) was born and died in Ceylon, but in the reign of Bābar, Gurū Nānak visited that island, and there made a disciple of Changa Bhāṭṭrā, a descendant of Mádho.³

The writer of this sentence calls the tradition a legend,⁴ as indeed it must be, but this does not necessarily mean that the Hakikat Rāh references are incorrect. There appear to be four possible explanations.

¹GR, p.230.

²See supra p. 374. The IO Library Ms Panj. B40 specifies 100 maunds, but does not indicate the period for which it was intended. See supra p.

³A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c, vol. ii, p.93. The GR refers to Changa Bhāṭṭrā as a disciple of 'the yogi of Jāpāpāṭan.' Loc.cit., p.232.

⁴A Glossary &c., vol.ii, p.98.

One is that Bhāṭṭrā tradition may have developed before the Hakikat Rāh was written and that its author or his source erroneously identified all groups of emigrant Sikhs as Bhāṭṭrās. The second is that itinerant Bhāṭṭrās had moved from the Pañjāb to the south. The third is that the sub-caste's conversion was indeed the result of contact with Gurū Nānak personally. (There is no reference in the Hakikat Rāh to a connection between the community and Ceylon.) Fourthly, there may have been no Sikhs there at all, in which case the references are all completely incorrect. Of these the first appears to be the most likely. The fact that the Hakikat Rāh itself is obviously related to a southern journey indicates the possibility of such movement and G. B. Singh in the third of his Dacca Review articles¹ claims that during this period khatri families from the Pañjāb emigrated to the east and south of India in pursuit of trade.

This third article by G. B. Singh is also of interest in that he describes in it what he calls "an itinerary of a pilgrim to the Sikh temples in Southern India and Ceylon" which he discovered in Dacca in a manuscript copy of the Ādi Granth dated S.1732 (AD 1675).

Among the memoranda noted in these manuscripts there are some items of considerable importance and interest. One of them is an itinerary of a pilgrim to the Sikh temples in Southern India and Ceylon. Whoever wrote it, it is clear that he existed long

¹ Dacca Review, February and March, 1916.

before Sambat 1732, and had actually travelled as far as Ceylon. There may be exaggeration in his account of the victuals consumed at the daily Yagya at the principal temple in Ceylon, but it cannot be denied that his account has every appearance of truth. He gives a circumstantial and correct account of the route. Evidently on his way out he took boat at Negapettam on the Coromandel Coast and returned through Malayalam. He says he met Mayadaman, the grandson of Shivanabhi and found stray colonies of Bhatra Sikhs in Malayalam.¹

Unfortunately G. B. Singh gives no indication of the relationship of this "itinerary" to the Hakikat Rah. The similarities are obviously very close and in both cases the accounts are to be found added to manuscript copies of the Adi Granth. The only differences are that the Hakikat Rah makes no reference either to its author having boarded a ship or to his having met Māyādunne. These differences may arise from errors made by G. B. Singh, for the nature of his articles suggests that he was to some extent at least relying on memory. Principal Tejā Singh evidently assumed that G. B. Singh's "itinerary" is the same as the Hakikat Rah:

In an old manuscript copy of the Holy Granth, written in 1675, is found the story of a Sikh's travels in the Deccan, called Hakikat rah Mugam, from which we gather something about the Sikh sangats and temples scattered over Southern India and Ceylon.²

¹Dacca Review, February and March, 1916. A reference in A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab &c, vol. i, p.687, n.4 indicates that this extract is on p.376 of Vol. v of the Dacca Review.

²Teja Singh, Sikhism, p.37.

Certainly, the relationship if not one of complete identity must at least be very close, and if there are differences the S. 1732 version must be a corrupt copy of the earlier Bhāī Banno account.

APPENDIX 4

Gurū Nānak and Kabīr

Did Kabīr and Gurū Nānak ever meet, and did Gurū Nānak know the works of Kabīr? It is commonly assumed that at least the second of these questions may be answered in the affirmative¹ and a few writers have also accepted the first as an established fact.² Can affirmative answers be sustained in either case?

The first question has already been considered in the analysis of the janam-sākhī traditions and has been answered in the negative.³ Traditions which record such a meeting are to be

¹E. Trumpp, The Ādi Granth, p. xcvi. M. Monier-Williams, Brahmanism and Hinduism, p.162. E.W. Hopkins, The Religions of India, p.511. G. H. Westcott, Kabir and the Kabir Panth, p.2 n.4. J. E. Carpenter, Theism in Medieval India, p.474 n.2. R. Burn, art. Kabir, Kabirpanthis in the ERE, vol. 7 p.632. Tejā Singh and Ganḍa Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.31. Yusuf Husain, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture, pp. 27-28. The Delhi Sultanate (vol. 6 of the History and Culture of the Indian People), p.571. Ch. Vaudeville, Au Cabaret de l'Amour, p.9. L. Renou and J. Filliozat, L'Inde Classique, vol.i. pp. 473, 658. S. M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, p.127. The same assumption also appears in much earlier works, e.g. J. Malcolm, Sketch of the Sikhs (1812), pp. 145-6; L. von Orlich, Travels in India, (1845), vol. i, p.163.

²F. E. Keay, Kabir and his Followers, pp. 27-8. Ahmad Shāh, The Bījak of Kabīr, pp. 33-4. Khazan Singh, History and Philosophy of Sikhism, vol. i, p.82. Lajwanti Rama Krishna, Les Sikhs, p.59. K. S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanate, p.300.

³See supra pp. 304-5.

found in Kabīr-panthī literature as well as in the Sikh janam-sākhīs;¹ but these must be similarly rejected. Kabīr-panthī traditions concerning the life of Kabīr are notoriously unreliable and can be accepted only when confirmed by other evidence. In this case there is no such evidence.

The second question cannot, however, be dismissed in this summary manner. As we have noted above, it is commonly assumed that Gurū Nānak did know the works of Kabīr and there are evidently a variety of reasons for this general acceptance.

In a few cases the basis of the assumption appears to be the inclusion of works by Kabīr in "Nānak's Ādi Granth".² Such instances reflect an elementary misunderstanding. It was Gurū Arjan, the fifth Gurū, who compiled the Ādi Granth, not Gurū Nānak.

A second source is evidently to be found in two references to Kabīr which occur in pads bearing the signature "Nānak".³

Nāmā chhibā Kabīru juolāhā pūre Gura te gati pāī.

Nāmā Jaideu Kambīru Trilochanu aujāti Ravidāsu
chamiāru chamaīā.

¹ Purushottam-lāl Shrivāstav, Kabīr Sāhitya kā Adhyayan, p.311.

² "The prominence given to Kabīr in Nānak's Ādi Granth is evidence enough of the influence that the earlier teacher had upon him." Nicol Macnicol, Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period, p.145.

³ R. K. Varma, Sant Kabīr, pp. 40-41. Govind Trigunāyat, Kabīr ki Vicharadharā, pp. 8-9.

The author in each case does indeed give his name as "Nānak", but neither is by Gurū Nānak, the first Gurū. All of the Sikh Gurus invariably used the name Nānak in their compositions. The first of these lines is by the third Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās,¹ and the second by the fourth Nānak, Gurū Rām Dās.² A reference to Kabīr does appear in a pad attributed to Gurū Nānak, but it is an apocryphal work which is not included in the Ādi Granth.³

A third source is a line attributed to Gurū Gobind Singh.

Kabīr panth ab bhayo khālsa.

The religion of Kabīr has now become the Khālsā.⁴

The origin of this line is not known, but it is certainly not the work of Gurū Gobind Singh. It may possibly be a confused version of the tradition that Gurū Gobind Singh altered the last line of Kabīr's Sorāthi 3, changing an original khulās to khālse.⁵

A fourth argument, and the only one which carries any weight, is the claim that a comparison of Gurū Nānak's works with those of Kabīr will reveal similarities which can be explained only by the assumption that Gurū Nānak had access to at least some of Kabīr's

¹Siri Rāgu Aṣṭ 22, AG p.67.

²Bilāvalu Aṣṭ 7, AG p.835.

³It is included in the Purātan JSs and is said to have been recited before Babur. See Pur JS, p.63.

⁴Yusuf Husain, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture, pp. 27-28. Ahmad Shāh, The Bijak of Kabīr, p.34.

⁵'Kahu Kabīra jana bhae khālse prema bhagati jiha jānī.' - Kabīr, Sorāthi 3, AG p.654. The tradition is certainly mistaken. The Kartarpur

compositions. This case has been argued at some length by Professor Sāhib Singh in his commentary on the Kabīr pads included in the Ādi Granth.¹ Many of the resemblances which he perceives are too vague to warrant consideration as they concern common themes rather than actual correspondence, and others disappear if we use the corresponding pads in the Kabīr-granthāvalī as our standard of comparison rather than the Ādi Granth versions. There remain, however, a few which possess a verbal correspondence and which retain it regardless of whether the Kabīr-granthāvalī or the Ādi Granth is used. The following are the clearest examples:

1. Supanai bindu na deī jharanā.²

Supanai bindu na deī jharapā.³

2. Gurū kari giānu dhīānu kari mahūā bhau bhāṭhī
mana dhārā.⁴

Gurū kari giānu dhīānu kari dhāvai kari karapī
kasu paīai;
Bhāṭhī bhavanu prema kā pochā itu rasi amiu
chuaīai.⁵

(cont.) copy of the AG (which was written before the time of Gurū Gobind Singh) has khālse, and the corresponding pad in the KG (no.264) has khālsai.

¹Sāhib Singh, Bhagat-bānī saṭik, Part 4, pp. 26-51. See also his commentary on the AG śloks of Kabīr, Śalok Bhagat Kabīr jī saṭik, pp. 65 ff, and Teja Singh, Gaṇḍa Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p.31.

²Kabīr, Bhairau 11, AG p.1160. The corresponding KG pad is no.330.

³Gurū Nānak, Vār Rāmakalī, ślok 5 of paurī 12, AG p.952.

⁴Kabīr, Rāmakalī 2, AG p.969. The corresponding KG pad is No. 72.

⁵Gurū Nānak, Āsā 38, AG p.360.

3. Manu jīte jagu jītīā jān te bikhīā te hoi udāsu.¹
 Āī panthī sagala jamātī mani jītai jagu jītu.²
4. Binu Satigura baṭa na pāī.³
 Binu Satigura baṭa na pāvai.⁴
5. Añjana māhi Nirañjani rahīai bahyri na bhavajali
 pāīā.⁵
 Añjana māhi Nirañjani rahīai joga jugati iva
 pāīai.⁶

Although the correspondence is at once obvious it does not prove that Gurū Nānak necessarily possessed the works of Kabīr. The assumption that he did possess them is a possible explanation, but it is not the most likely one. In all five cases, with perhaps the exception of the second, we have examples of the kind of epigram which could easily have gained common currency within the circle of the sants. The sants certainly developed a specialised terminology and a number of conventional figures of speech recur in their works. It is entirely reasonable to assume that in the same manner there developed a common fund of aphorisms. The examples which are common to Gurū Nānak and Kabīr indicate the possibility of a direct connection, but it is a slender one and there can be no justification for affirming such a connection categorically.

¹Kabīr, Mārū 2, AG p.1103. The corresponding KG pad is no.300.

²Gurū Nānak, Japjī (28), AG p.6.

³Kabīr, Basant 3, AG p.1194.

⁴Gurū Nānak, Salok Sahasakritī, AG p.1353. The same line is also to be found in Beni's Prabhatī 1, AG p.1351.

In addition to these brief examples of verbal correspondence there are also two compositions which in the Ādi Granth are attributed to Gurū Nānak, but which appear also in the Kabīr-granthāvalī as the work of Kabīr. These are Gurū Nānak's Gauṛī 4,¹ which is obviously the sema pad as number 42 in the Kabīr-granthāvalī, and the opening ślok of Āsā dī Vār which appears as the second of the Kabīr-granthāvalī dohās. The ślok is as follows:

Baliḥārī Gura āpaṇe diuhārī sada vāra,
Jini māṇasa te devate kīe karata na lāgī vāra.²

The Kabīr-granthāvalī version differs only slightly.

Baliḥārī Gura āpaṇain dyaunhārī kai bāra,
Jini māṇiṣa tain devata karata na lāgī bāra.³

There are three possible explanations which may account for this confusion. The first is that the two compositions are by Kabīr and were in Gurū Nānak's possession. The second is that they are by Kabīr and came to be erroneously attributed to Gurū Nānak during the period between his death and the compilation of the Ādi Granth in AD 1603-4. The third is that they are the work of Gurū Nānak, but

(cont.)

⁵Kabīr, Gauṛī 46, AG p.332.

⁶Gurū Nānak, Sūhī 8, AG p.730.

¹AG, p.152.

²Gurū Nānak, Vār Āsā, ślok 1 of paurī 1, AG pp. 462-3.

³KG, dohā 1:2. See Ch. Vaudeville, Kabīr Granthāvalī (Dohā), p.1.

subsequently came to be attributed to Kabīr. As far as the possibility of Gurū Nānak having been acquainted with the works of Kabīr is concerned it is only the first of these which has any relevance and it may be summarily dismissed. To accept it would be to assume that Gurū Nānak had passed off the work of another sant as his own.¹

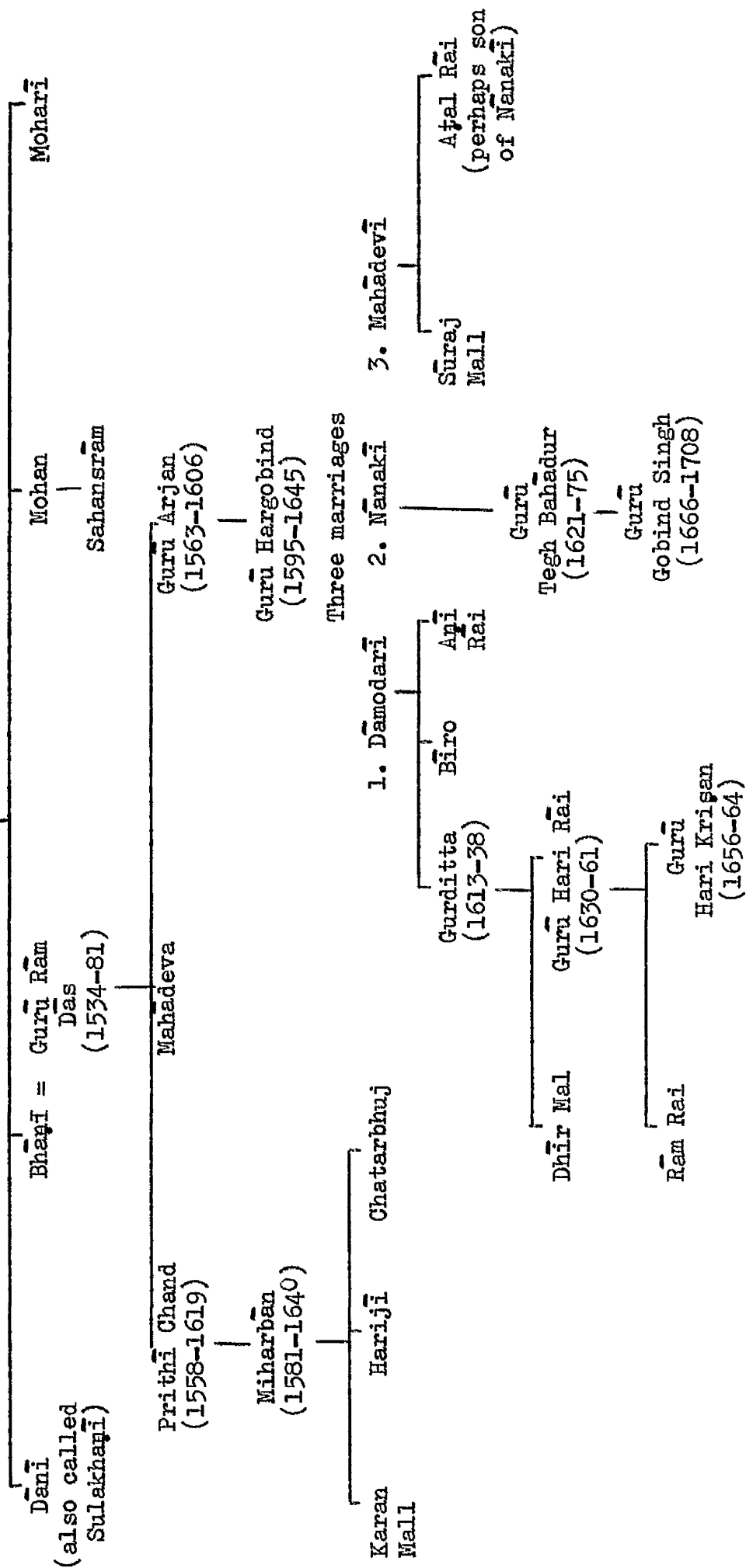
The examples of verbal correspondence are sufficient to suggest that Gurū Nānak may have known some of the compositions of Kabīr, but they do no more than establish it as a remote possibility. We may conclude that in all likelihood Gurū Nānak and Kabīr neither met nor knew each other's works.

¹Of the two remaining possibilities the latter is much the more likely. In the first place there is an evident contrast between the care with which Gurū Arjan compiled the AG and the enormous quantity of apocryphal verse which has been attributed to Kabīr. Secondly, the KG dohas 3:21 and 3:41 appear in the AG as śloks 36 and 103 of Shaikh Farīd. Gurū Amar Dās evidently accepted at least the second of the śloks as Farīd's work (or as the work of a successor of Farīd) as he comments on it in another ślok which in the AG appears immediately after it (AG p.1383). Dr. Mohan Singh has argued that this second ślok "is undoubtedly Lahndi in its grammar and phonetics" and that for this reason it may safely be regarded as Farīd's work, not that of Kabīr. (Kabīr - His Biography, p.52.)

APPENDIX 5

The Descendants of Gurū Amar Dās

Gurū Amar Dās (1479-1574)



GLOSSARY

agīan (ajñāna): ignorance, nescience.

amrit (amṛta): the nectar of immortality.

anahad śabad: the mystical "sound" or "unstruck music" which is "heard" at the climax of the Haṭha-yoga process (q.v.).

apsaras: a nymph of Indra's heaven.

aṣṭapadī: a poem or hymn of eight, or occasionally more, stanzas.

atīt: one who has "passed beyond"; an ascetic.

avatār: a "descent"; incarnation of a deity, usually Viṣṇu.

Baikunth: the paradise of Viṣṇu.

bairāgī: an ascetic, a recluse; a Vaiṣṇava sect.

bānī (vānī): speech; the utterances of the Gurūs and bhagats (q.v.) recorded in the Ādi Granth.

baqā: the Sūfī concept of a continuing existence within the unitive condition of fanā (q.v.).

bhagat (bhakta): an exponent of bhakti (q.v.); a devotee.

bhagatī (bhakti): belief in, and adoration of, a personal God.

bhatt: a caste of bards and genealogists.

bīr: volume, usually a collection of several different works in a single binding.

brahmachārī: a celibate.

buddhi: the mind as the source of wisdom, intelligence.

chamār: an outcaste leather-worker.

chapātī: flat, unleavened, wholemeal bread.

chhant (chhandas): metre, measure. In the Ādi Granth a poem
or hymn of variable length.

chirajīvin: gods or deified mortals who live for long periods
or attain immortality.

chitt: mind, intellect, reasoning faculty.

daitya: a titan, demon giant.

dānav: a demon giant.

darśan: view, vision; audience with a person of regal or spiritual
stature, visit to a holy shrine or object; the six
systems of brahmanical philosophy.

darveś: dervish, a Muslim mendicant (esp. Sūfī).

dās: servant, slave.

dasam duār (dasama dvāra): "the tenth door" as opposed to the nine
physiological orifices of the human body; according
to Haṭha-yoga theory the mystical orifice which gives
access to the condition of sahaj (q.v.).

deś: country.

dev lok: the land of the gods.

dharam (dharma): the appropriate moral and religious obligations
attached to any particular status in Hindu society.

dharamsālā (dharmasālā): a place of worship; an inn (generally
a religious foundation) for pilgrims and travellers.

dhikr: the Sūfī discipline of "remembrance" or thinking on God.

dil: heart.

dīp (dvīp): continent, island.

dohā: couplet.

Dvāparayug: the third of the four cosmic ages.

fanā: the Sūfī conception of the merging of the individual self
in the Universal Being.

faqīr: Muslim ascetic.

gaddī: the cushion on which a ruler sits; throne; seat of
spiritual authority.

gandharav: celestial musician.

gharī: a period of time equal to 24 minutes.

ghaṭ: heart.

ghaṭ: landing-place, pier, bathing-place, place where corpses
are cremated.

gīān (jñān): knowledge, wisdom.

gīānī (jñānī): a possessor of knowledge, esp. religious knowledge.

gobind lok: Vaiṣṇava devotees.

gosāl, gusāl: master; a Śaivite title of reverence.

goṣṭ: discourse.

granthī: one appointed to read and expound the Gurū Granth Sahib.

gunas: the three vital "qualities" which by their varying proportions determine the nature of all that exists.

gurbāṇī: the utterances of the Gurū.

gurdwārā: Sikh temple.

gurmukh: a follower of the Gurū.

gurpurab: the anniversary of a Gurū's birthday.

gurū: a spiritual preceptor, usually a person, but sometimes understood as the divine inner voice. See pp.503 ff.

gurūpades: the teaching of the Gurū.

hajī: a pilgrim to Mecca.

haṅkār (ahaṅkāra): pride.

Haṭha-yoga: "yoga of force", a variety of yoga requiring physical postures and processes of extreme difficulty.

haumai: self, self-centredness. See pp.541 ff.

hiradā (hrdaya): heart.

hukam: will, command. See pp. 511 ff.

Jampur: See Yampur.

janam-patrī: horoscope cast at birth.

janam-sākhī: a traditional biography, esp. of Gurū Nānak.

janeū (yajñopavīta): sacred thread.

jīv: soul, spirit, psyche.

jñān: See giān.

julāhā: weaver caste.

kabitt: a poetic metre.

Kaliyug: the fourth and last of the cosmic ages; the age of degeneracy.

kām: lust.

Kānpaṭ: "split ear"; sect of yogīs, followers of Gorakhnāth and practitioners of Haṭha-yoga (q.v.), so called because of their pierced ears in which rings are worn. See Nāth.

karam (Persian): grace.

karam (Skt. karma): the destiny, fate of an individual, generated in accordance with the deeds performed in his present and past existences.

kavita: poem.

khaṇḍ: region, realm.

khatri: a mercantile caste, mainly Hindu and particularly important in the Pañjāb.

kinnar: celestial musician possessing a human body and the head of a horse.

kirpā (kripā): grace.

kīrtan: the singing of songs in praise of God, generally by a group and to the accompaniment of music.

koh, kos (krośa): a linear measure varying from one to two miles in different parts of India.

krodh: wrath, anger.

lākh: one hundred thousand.

laṅgar: public kitchen.

laṅgoṭī: loincloth.

liṅg: phallus, phallic symbol.

lobh: greed, covetousness.

loṭā: a small metal vessel.

mahān purukh (mahā puruṣa): a person of exalted spiritual stature.

mahant: chief; superior of a monastery or other religious institution.

man (manas): mind. (This translation is, however, inadequate. See pp. 531 ff .)

mañjī: a small string bed; areas of spiritual jurisdiction designated by Gurū Amar Dās. (See p. 208 n. 1 .)

manmukh: one who follows his own self-centred impulses rather than the guidance of the gurū (cf gurmukh q.v.).

mantar (mantra): a verse or phrase of particular religious import; a verse or phrase believed to possess magical qualities.

maqāmāt: (plural form of maqām) the stages of spiritual development in the Sūfī ascent to mystical union.

mātā: mother.

mati: intellect.

maulānā: a title accorded to Muslim judges or other Muslims respected for their learning.

māyā: (in Vedānt) cosmic illusion; (in Sant thought) the corruptible and corrupting world, with all its snares, presented to man as permanent and incorruptible and so masquerading as ultimate truth. In Sant usage the term has strong moral overtones and is frequently symbolised by lucre and women. See pp. 549 ff.

mela: religious fair.

mihar: mercy, compassion.

miharāb: the niche in a mosque which indicates the direction of the Ka'bah.

mitī: date, day of a lunar month.

moh: attachment to worldly things.

mohinī: seductive woman, siren.

monī (muni): an ascetic who observes complete silence.

mullāh: a teacher of the law and doctrines of Islam.

muraqabat: the Sūfī discipline of meditation.

nadar, nazar: sight, glance; grace.

Nām: the divine Name, the expression of the being and nature of God in terms comprehensible to the human understanding. See pp. 498 ff.

namāz: Muslim prayer, esp. the prescribed daily prayers.

narak: hell.

Nāth: lit. Master. The sect of Kānpṭh yogīs (q.v.), followers of Gorakhnāth and practitioners of Haṭha-yoga; the nine legendary or semi-legendary teachers of the sect, said to live on in the fastnesses of the Himālayas. Cf Siddh (q.v.).

nawāb: governor, viceroy.

nirguṇ: without "qualities" or attributes. Cf saguṇ.

pad: (1) foot; (2) state, condition; (3) a song in praise of God.

pāhul: Sikh baptism.

paisā: money, pice.

pañchayat: committee of five chosen by village, sub-caste &c.

pāndhā: teacher, paṇḍit.

panth: path; sect; community.

parganā: subdivision of a province of sūbah.

paṭel: headman of a village.

paṭvārī: village land accountant.

paurī: lit. staircase; stanza.

pahir: a period of time equal to three hours; a watch.

pīr: the head of a Sūfī order; a Sūfī saint.

pīṭh-sthān: the fifty-one places where, according to Tantric mythology, pieces of Sati's body fell after her dismemberment by Śiv.

potā: grandson (son's son).

pothī: volume.

prasād: grace, favour.

prem-bhakti: love-bhakti (q.v.), loving adoration of God.

pujārī: Hindu priest.

pūran-māsī (pūrṇamāsī): the full-moon day.

qalandar: itinerant Muslim ascetic.

qāzī: a Muslim judge, administrator of Islamic law.

rabāb: rebeck, a three-stringed instrument.

rabābī: rebeck player.

rāg: a series of five or more notes upon which a melody is
based; melody.

rās: a circular dance associated with Kṛṣṇa.

ridā (hrdaya): heart.

risī (ṛṣi): legendary sage.

Śabad (Śabda): Word; the divine self-communication. See pp. 488 ff.

śabad (śabda): word. In Sikh usage an Ādi Granth pad (q.v.).

sach (satya): truth; true.

sādhana: method of attaining or "realising" an ultimate
spiritual objective.

sādhū: mendicant, ascetic, saint.

sagun: possessing "qualities", attributes; manifested, usually
as an avatār (q.v.). Cf nirgun (q.v.).

sahaj: the condition of ultimate, inexpressible beauty; the
ultimate state of mystical unity.

sākhi: (1) testimony, witness, evidence; (2) section of a
janam-sākhi (q.v.); (3) dohā, couplet.

śakta: a believer in śakti (q.v.), member of a śakti cult.

śakti: the energy or potency of a god (generally Śiv) expressed
 in his feminine counterpart. Śakti worship, performed
 by tantric sects (Hindu and Buddhist), commonly in-
 cluded magical mantars (q.v.) and symbols, sexual
 practices, and the consumption of flesh and alcohol.
 See also Tantras.

sālgrām (sālagrāma): ammonite found in the bed of the river
 Gaṇḍakī, prized as sacred stone on account of the
 spiral patterns in it which are regarded as repre-
 sentations of Viṣṇu.

saṃādhi: harmonisation; tomb; building or monument erected in
 memory of a deceased person.

saṅgat: a gathering, assembly.

sant: In general usage a synonym for sādhū (q.v.). The word has,
 however, two specific applications: (1) a member
 of the Vārakarī sect of Maharashtra (see p. 46);
 (2) a member of the Sant tradition of Northern India,
 a loose fellowship of believers in a supreme, non-
 incarnated God (see pp. 43 ff.).

sannyāsī: one who has renounced all worldly possessions and
 relationships.

Satgurū: the True Gurū, God.

Sati Nām: the True Name. See Nām.

Satiyug, Satyayug: the first of the four cosmic ages.

satsaṅg: a gathering of true believers, esp. for the singing
of kīrtan (q.v.).

savayyā: panegyric.

siddhi: fulfilment, realisation, mystical consummation.

Siddhs: 84 exalted personages believed to have attained
immortality through the practice of yoga and to
be dwelling deep in the Himālayas. Cf Nāth.

ślok: couplet or stanza.

śrāddh: offering of food &c to brāhmins on behalf of deceased
forbears.

sūbah: province.

sudī: the light half of a lunar month. Cf vadī.

surati (smṛti): remembrance (of the Nām); consciousness; the
faculty of spiritual perception.

svarag: heaven; specifically the heaven of Indra.

tahsīl: subdivision of a district.

takht: throne; seat of royal or spiritual authority.

Tantras: texts enunciating the forms of śakti worship (q.v.).

taras: pity, mercy.

thag: strictly, a member of the cult of ritual murderers who
strangled and robbed in the name of Kālī, but loosely
used for any highwayman or violent robber.

tīrath: a sacred place, a place of pilgrimage.

tīrath-yātrā: a tour of important places of pilgrimage.

Tretāyug: the second of the four cosmic ages.

tulsi-mālā: a garland of basil leaves carried by Vaiṣṇavas.

Udāsī: an order of ascetics founded by Śrī Chand, one of Gurū

Nānak's two sons.

udāsī: lengthy journey, tour.

ur: heart.

vadī: the dark half of a lunar month. Cf sudī.

Vāhigurū: "Wonderful Lord!", a Sikh salutation; God.

vaid: physician.

Vaikunṭh: See Baikunṭh.

var: an heroic ode of several stanzas; a song of praise; a dirge.

vāratak: prose.

vismād: immense awe; ecstasy engendered by awe.

yakṣa: minor divinities associated with Kubera, the god of wealth.

Yam: the god of the dead.

Yampur: the abode of Yam.

yug: cosmic era.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

(E) English (F) French (G) German

(H) Hindī (P) Pañjābī

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